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You Bet Bob from Cross Creek.

BY ARIZONA CY.



THE MAYOR'S FUNERAL.

You Bet Bob from Cross Crick; OR, THE CALAMITY AT SAWBUCK CITY.

BY ARIZONA CY.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARIN' TO P'TIC'PATE.

"Bob," said I, suddent, one mornin', "Gunsight John has gone dead."

"Not Gunsight John, ther mayor ov Sawbuck City?" cried Bob, his under jaw droppin' and hangin' limber.

"Ther same," said I. "Ther news has jest been brought over from thar, and Sawbuck City is goin' to have one ov ther bangupedest plantin's on record."

"Sho!" sez Bob, plum dazed. "Ye shure don't mean et, Cy Johnson? Not Gunsight John thet could lick his weight in wildcats, and thet 'lected himself mayor by lickin' his 'ponent clean out'n his boots?"

"Ther self-same," said I. "What is more, Bob, Cross Crick has got ter do herself handsome on thet occasion, and I move thet we 'p'int you and me a committee ov two ter see thet our town is properly represented in ther procession, and sech."

"I second ther moshun," said Bob, prompt enough. "But, Cy, I can't believe et's so," he added.

"Oh! et's sure enough so," I 'sured him.

"Did he die with his boots on?" Bob asked me, wonderin'. "Ye know he allus said he would never die no other manner."

"He died with 'em on," said I, "though it was a close call fer his not doin' et, if ther report is true in every particular. He called fer 'em at ther last minute."

"How was that?" Bob asked me.

"Wull," said I, "ye see he was taken down with nomoneya—"

"Ther same as we wur taken down at Hold-up on one 'casion," Bob made bold ter interrupt.

"About ther same, only different," I answered his fool-question. "That was a goneness of ther pockets, while this was a plum fullness ov ther belluses. A disease."

"I see," said Bob.

"I'm glad ye do," said I.

"Proceed," said Bob, some meeker.

"Wull," said I, "he got taken with thet thar nomoneya, and et hit him hard. He died yisterdy. Jest 'fore he sloped off they seen thar was somethin' he 'peared ter want, and he seemed ter want et bad."

"Mebby a parson?" Bob made bold again.

"They asked him ef it was that, but he shook his head et wasn't. It was somethin' he wanted badder'n that."

"Mebby whisk?" said Bob.

"Jest what they thought et must be," said I, 'cording to what I had heard ov ther facts ov ther case, "but he sorter got mad an' made 'em understand et was somethin' he wanted a heap wuss'n whisky. They wur plum at loss then, as ye may be sure."

"What was et?" cried Bob, himself clean bewildered.

"What I told ye," said I. "He wanted his boots put on. Ye see, he had allus made his boast, same as you said, that he would never die no other manner, and when they got his meanin' it was plain enough that he wanted 'em ter pull on his stogies fer him, so he could be as good as his word. Et must 'a' been a sublime moment, pard."

"I don't b'live he'd 'a' died ef they hadn't 'bliged him," said Bob.

"Jest as mebbby as not," said I. "He was a man ov grit, and ef they hadn't 'bliged him, no tellin' what moughtn't happened. But they pulled 'em on fer him, so ther feller tells, and a seraffic smile spread over his countenance and he let go his hold and passed off as peaceful as a babe that lets go ther lug and drops ter sleep. Yes, he died with 'em on, but et was a close call fer et, as I told ye."

"When is ther plantin'?" asked Bob.

"Termorrer," said I.

"And et has been moved and seconded that you an' me go up thar as a committee ov two from Cross Crick. All in favor ov that will signify by sayin' Aye."

We said et both together, and ther moshun prevailed.

e wur duly elected.

By the way, dear reader, don't pay any 'tention to my spellin'. It is my own individual and peculiar way.

The editor of the Howler used ter lose a good deal ov sleep over my spellin', settin' up o' nights to spell out ther words in my copy and make 'em straight, but he got tired ov it, and so did his readers, too.

You see, I spell about as we talk out in these parts, and the boys like it a heap better'n the Websterian way. It is a sort ov short-hand system, and it goes right to the spot every time. When the boys ov Cross Crick see a word ov mine in print they know at once what it means.

This by the way.

We'll now proceed, with 'pology fer ther break.

When me and Bob make up our minds ter do 'a thing, that same thing most gen'ly comes ter pass.

Havin' made up our minds that we would 'tend ther funeral of ther late lamented Gunsight John, we further 'p'inted ourselves a committee ov ways and means fer ther 'casion.

Ther matter rested doubly heavy on me.

Not only had I ter do my share ov upholdin' ther dignity ov our town, but I had ter stand fer ther Howler as well.

Bein' reg'lar field correspondent ov ther Howler, I felt it restin' heavy on me ter make ther best showin' I could in ther interests ov the paper that gives me my salt.

Me and Bob put our heads together, and we decided that it would be ther proper caper if we went into mournin' fer ther late lamented.

We felt that we could do that up in a way to beat ther band. We might be able ter give Sawbuck City p'int and still come out ahead at the close of the game.

That was one p'int settled.

"But what's fer mournin'?" asked Bob ov me.

"What's fer mournin'?" I said, over after him, ruther staggered.

"Yes, what's fer mournin'?"

"Black, ov ccourse."

"Any durn ijjit would know that," growled Bob.

"Then why did ye ask me?" I demanded ov him, thinkin' I had one on him that time.

"'Cause I ain't a durn ijjit, and hence didn't know," he shot back at me, and I wilted and asked him forthwith what he would take that time.

"I know black's fer mournin'," he said after we had gone and indulged. "What I wanted ter come at was, whur are we goin' ter git ther black? That is ther question before ther committee."

I had ter scratch my head; that was a

pcser, sure enough; whar was ther black ter come from?

Then of a suddent it struck me, and I slapped my pard on ther back and ka-whooped around thar like ary Apache.

"I have got et, Bob, I have got et!" I yelled.

"Yes, ye act as if ye have," said Bob, some sarcastic.

"I plum shur have," I declared, takin' no notice of his hint.

"Well, what is et?" he asked.

"Yer know Plug Simpson's wife that went dead?" said I.

"Shur," said he.

"Well, yer know she used ter have a black gown fer Sunday best, don't yer?"

"Jest ther thing!" yelled Bob, jumpin' up and ka-whoopin' some himself. "We are in et, pard, clean up to our ears, and if we don't make Sawbuck City dizzy et won't be our fault."

"It plum shur won't," I 'greed with him.

So, off we sot ter find Plug Simpson.

He was at his cabin, whur his wife had left him some weeks before with a couple ov kids on his hands ter take keer ov.

I had writ ther late Mrs. Simpson up fine in ther Howler, and so stood in well with Plug, and when I worked around to ther matter in hand I touched ther harp gently, as et wur, and won him over.

Fur a triflin' consideration we got all ther black thar was in ther cabin, ther which same ther late lamented had no funder use fer, and off we sot to our own wickiup to transform ther black gown and other trappin's into funeral garb ther finest.

CHAPTER II.

WHAR'IN WE SALLY FORTH.

You'd orter seen me an' Bob ther bai-ance ov that day.

Thar we sot on ther floor ov our bungalow, cross-legged like a couple of tailors, a-conjurin' and a-contrivin' funeral trappin's out'n that thar black stuff.

Billup, that keeps ther only store hyer at Cross Crick, was somewhat s'prised when we dropped in on him and bought nigh-about his hull stock ov needles and thread ter begin with, but he would 'a' been more s'prised ef he could 'a' seen us about ther time we got well inter ther job.

"Bob," said I, "how are ye makin' out?"

"I'm alive yet," asserted Bob, straightenin' ther kinks out'n ther spine ov his back and lookin' up at me. "How is et with you?"

"Ditter," said I. "I have stitched my fingers fast somethin' less'n a thousand times, and have not stitched ther bulge ov my shirt fast ter somethin' else more'n a hundred."

"How d'ye think we are goin' ter look?" asked Bob.

"We'll look plum gorjus," I answered him. "Thar won't be no flies on us."

"Think we'll be chief mourners?"

"I reckon we will."

So, thar we sot and made furbelows and thingumbobs galore, and we never stopped oncet till we run out ov black stuff and had ter call a halt.

Then we got up and shook off ther splinters and shavin's, so ter say, and I took ter myself what I had built, and Bob took ter himself what he had built, and we surveyed it over sorter proud.

"Bob," said I, full ov feelin'.

"Wull," said Bob, sober enough.

"D'ye s'pose ther dead knows what is goin' on hyer on earth?"

"Mebby enough," said Bob, sorter

wonderin' what I was a-comin' at, and lookin' fer me ter proceed.

"I was thinkin' what a happy woman Hanner Simpson must be, if she kin see ther noble use we have put her old duds to," I explained, sorter impressive. "Don't yer think so?"

"I'm plenty enough glad she is a speerit," said Bob. "I'd a heap ruther she'd do her admirin' ov our handiwork from ther speerit world, than ter be hyer in ther flesh ter speak her mind." And I sang me if he didn't sweat over ther eyes at ther thought.

Well, we laid them thar things tenderly away, and went down town.

At ther favorite saloon we heard more ov ther p'ticlars ov that funeral, and we made up our minds that we wur goin' ter be right in et.

Thar was ter be speechin', paradin', and a grand time in general, and in ther evenin' ther hull thing was ter be topped off with fireworks. Sawbuck City was goin' ter do herself proud.

Last thing ov all, ther late lamented was ter be buried by torchlight, and then thar was to be a dance to his memory.

Not that they made light ov et, not by a heap.

In that way they meant ter show ther preciation ov ther honored dead.

They regretted that sech a man as Gunsight John couldn't 'a' had his last wish an' died with his boots on—that is, her way he meant. He died with 'em on, but he meant different.

Seein' that he had been denied that distinction, they wur goin' to make amends er et the best they could, and had resolved ter give him ther biggest thing in ther way ov a funeral that ther town ov Sawbuck could git up. And me and Bob wur goin' ter help 'em all we could.

Next mornin' we wur up betimes.

Et was quite a ride up ter Sawbuck City, and we wanted ter git a early tart.

More'n that, we wanted ter git out ov Cross Crick before folks at home could git too blame queerious about our sing-ar make-ups.

In fact, we tried ter git out ov camp without bein' seen; but it wasn't any use. We wur seen, and a hull gang ov fellers em prancin' out ter inspect us in our urnal garb.

And, durn 'em, they lafft—actooly lafft! "Bob," said I, "what are they laffin' at?"

"Reckon et must be at you," said Bob. "More like at you," I 'torted.

"What do ye see ter laff at about me?" Bob fired up.

"Wull, mebbly enough yer hat," said I.

"Huh! et's better'n your'n," scored Bob. "Et is taller by two inches, I know," said I.

So we had it, back and forth, while we waited fer ther boys ter come up ter see us off.

Seein' that they had discovered us, and ad called out fer us ter hold on, we didn't like ter use 'em mean and ride off, so we waited.

But, blast 'em, ther nearer they got ter more they lafft, till I begun ter git led.

And I could see that Bob was beginnin' r git speckled, too.

They hadn't a thing ter laff at.

Et was sollum, an' sollum is as sollum does, you know.

We was doin' et all out ov respect fer er departed, and to uphold ther honor ov our camp, and they'd orter been proud ov us, is what we reckoned.

We each had on a mighty tall hat, which we had built out'n pasteboard and covered with black goods till et looked

like a reg'lar stovepipe; et was haff as tall as a j'int ov pipe.

Each ov them hats had a narrer brim—we had ter make 'em narrer, runnin' out ov cardboard. Around ther hats, then, was a great wide band ov black, with a yard extra that streamed down behind. We had set out ter be plum gorjus, and I opine we wur.

Wull, more'n that, we each had big bows on each ov our shoulders, with great long streamers flyin' from 'em, and more bows all ther way down ther front ov us, with bands around our arms and slappin' great big bows with more streamers at our knees. Wull, now, we had done et up to the queen's taste, I must confess.

And that wasn't all; thar was a black plume on each hoss's head, and a slashin' bow on ther tail ov each animile, with more streamers a-flyin' to ther breeze.

We had set out ter be chief mourners, and we meant ter be that or nothin'. And yet, thar wur our own townsmen gatherin' around us and laffin' like they wur a herd of jackasses.

"Yer pear ter feel good," sneered Bob at 'em.

"What do yer see, anyhow?" I scorned at 'em.

"That is jest what we'd, by gosh, like ter know," answered one ov ther gang.

"Wull, I'll tell ye," I shot out, speakin' plenty strong; but before I could do so, You-bet chipped in and allowed he would tell 'em.

I allowed he wouldn't. He opined he would, or nobody.

He scorned 'em plenty hearty, I tell ye.

I had et in mind ter knock off his mournin' hat, but thinkin' jest in time that such a proceedin' would spile all ther fun, I didn't.

Bob thought ov ther same thing at ther same time, so we desisted, and he allowed that I might do ther tellin' if I thought I could do it sufficient hard enough fer ther occasion.

I allowed I could, and sailed in.

"Feller cits," said I, full scathin', "ef ye had any respect fer ther dead and honor fer yer camp, ye wouldn't have ter ask what this is about. We are goin' to ther funeral ov ther late lamented Gunsight John, over to Sawbuck City, and we mean ter uphold ther dignity ov Cross Crick."

"You are a pair of blame fool jackasses," snorted one old cit, whose gray hairs I respected, or he would 'a' bit the dust then and there. "You will go over thar to Sawbuck City, and you will disgrace a respectable funeral, and you'll bring yer own camp into disrepute among ther nations ov ther earth; that's ther sum an' substance ov what you'll do."

"That is where you make your mistake, uncle," I blockaded. "We are goin' over thar to do honor to ther dead, and to weld ther bond of friendship that is already buddin' forth between these hyer two camps. We mean ter show 'em that we have a feller feelin' fer 'em in this ther sad hour ov distress, ez et wur, and we are goin' ter play ther role ov chief mcurners—or know ther reason why. Ef they are men, they will welcome us hearty."

That old feller allowed they would, too, plenty; and after a little more palaver, we sot out.

CHAPTER III.

MAKIN' OUR DAYBOO.

When we hove in sight ov Sawbuck City we could see at ther first blush that somethin' onusual wur on.

Ther mines wur closed down, and ther hull poppylashun wur kongregated nigh about ther center ov ther camp, near ther Gilt Edge saloon.

This we tuck in ther minnit that we riz over ther last ridge, and as we looked on ther scene et hit me that somethin' was loose about ther program ov ther day.

"Somethin's amiss," I opined to Bob.

"Et looks so," he opined back.

"What kin et be?"

"Give et up," said Bob, back again.

"Mebby they aire short uv black stuff," I hinted.

"Mebby enough," countered Bob. "Couldn't 'a' had any defunct Hanner Simpsonses hyer."

"These hyer one-hoss camps have got ter chawk long ter keep pace with Cross Crick, now I'm tellin' ye," I orated. "We'll soon know what's wrong."

We rode on down ther slope to ther gulch, ther drapery from our tall hats wavin' out behind like black banners, I opine, and ther streamers from our hosses' tails all a-flutter.

About ther time we got to ther bottom ther galoots ov Sawbuck sighted us comin', and they p'inted us out to one another mighty rapid.

We could see that they wur plum dazed with amaze.

No wonder.

That wur what we had come fer—to parrylize 'em.

We don't mean ter 'low no camp hyerabouts to rank ahead ov Cross Crick, you kin rely.

In about one mighty minnit ther hull blame camp wur starin' at us as if they had never seen ther likes before in ther lives.

Mebby they hain't.

"We hev knocked 'em, Cy," said Bob.

"That's what we by gosh have," I agreed with him.

"And we'll astonish 'em more, 'fore ther day is done, too," said he.

"Et will be our fault ef we don't, Bob," I supported. "That is what we hev come fer, I opine."

"Et shur is," said Bob.

We rode on, and as we drew nigh we sot our hosses to prancin'.

Ef we wasn't plum gorjus I would like to know et, that's all, with our tall hats and many bedeckin's.

Natcherly, as we drawed nigh unto them, we looked ter see how much black stuff they wur a-sportin' among 'em, and daze me if we could find but one emblem in ther hull gang.

That was worn by Gila Gabe, like a sash across his body and with long ends hangin' at his left hip.

We soon diskivered that he was actin' mayor, but, seein' us he looked rankled and rattled.

"Hello, citerzens!" I greeted 'em.

"Who in fumergashun be you?" growled out Gila Gabe.

"We cornstitute a dellygashun sent over from Cross Crick to do honor to yer dead," said I, loomin' up big.

"Ther climated clime ye do!" said he, scowlin'.

"Shur," my pard put in.

"Prezack," I added. "We have come ter mingle our weeps with your'n, and take ther part ov chief mourners, if need be."

Gila Gabe looked as if he didn't rightly know how to receive us. He 'peared ter be sorter stuck—or mebbly et was our plum gorjus array that struck him dumb.

We wur keepin' our hosses a-prancin' some and our plumes a-noddin' fer good effect.

While ther actin' mayor hesertated, another feller spoke up.

"Three cheers fer Cross Crick!" said he.

I could 'a' patted him on ther back fer that, fer et no doubt saved a early on-pleasantness that might have occurred just about then.

My little remark about minglin' our weeps had no doubt touched most ov 'em in a tender place, fer them thar cheers went up with a will, and showed ther actin' mayor which trail ter take to run clear ov windfalls.

He smoothed his rumpled feathers best he could, and proceeded to greet us handsome.

"Friends from Cross Crick," said he, "this hyer camp ov Sawbuck City greets ye welcome. Hop Wilson did a wise thing when he p'posed them cheers which ye have jist heard. This hyer is a sollum occasion, as ye will obsarve, and we feel glad ter know that Cross Crick is mindful ov our loss."

I looked at Bob.

Et was necessary fer one ov us ter say somethin'.

Bob gave me ther nod, and I took a long wind and sailed into ther job on hand.

"Sur and citizens," said I, in ther deepest voice I could fetch from ther region ov my boots, "ye do well ter greet us handsome as ye have done. Et is right fer neighborin' communities ter dwell in ther bonds ov sympathy and brotherly love. Cross Crick has yer sorrier deep ter heart, and they have on-loaded et all onto us, like ther sins ov ther people ov old used ter be on-loaded onto scapegoats that wur sent forth into ther howlin' wilderness, and we have brought et hyer to dump at yer feet as a simple token ov our esteem, ez et wur. In proof ov our deep sympathy, note ther mournin' we wear, and believe me when I say that the only reason we haven't got et on deeper still is 'cause we run short on black goods before we got fully trimmed."

That little talk seemed ter have ther right 'feck.

Ther same feller p'posed another batch ov cheers, and they went off even louder than the first edition.

"Whur is yer dead?" asked my pard.

"He is layin' in state in ther Gilt Edge hyer," said ther actin' mayor.

"Kin we see him?" asked Bob.

"Shur!" said Gila Gabe.

Bob guv me a wink, and I was plum shur he had designs on ther Gilt Edge, ov some sort or 'nuther.

Ther actin' mayor led ther way, and conducted us to ther doors ov ther saloon, which wur standin' both wide open to give ther people full chance to pass in and out.

We follered his lead, and it was plain ter be seen that we wur ther prime 'traction ov ther moment.

Gila Gabe's git-up couldn't hold a candle to our'n, no how, and we knowed that he knowed it and was sensertive ov ther komparison, fer he looked yaller even while he talked nice.

At ther door ther actin' mayor paused. He looked as if he s'posed we would dismount thar, and walk in.

But me and Bob had given ther wink and nod and arranged that we would ride in as we wur.

Gila Gabe held up his hands.

"Yer don't mean ter ride yer hosses in hyer?" he cried out.

"Why not?" Bob asked.

"Et won't do," ther actin' mayor negatived.

"We must do ther dead full honor," said I. "We will view ther remains mounted."

Bob and I understood, and we guv ther touch to our horses, and in we went, ther crowd trailin' after us full ov interest ter see what would happen next, I reckon.

In ther middle ov ther room stood ther box that contained all that was left ov ther late lamented, and me and Bob rode straight down to et, one on each side, and at ther head ov ther box we turned and faced ther doors, and thar we stopped and took off our tall hats.

Them same hats, by ther way, we had been 'bliged ter duck mighty low, comin' in at ther doors, ter save 'em. We now took 'em off, as I said, and holdin' 'em in our off hands we clasped our nigh ones across that coffin, and fer a spell wur impressive silent, while we looked upon ther camm, classic features ov ther dear departed galoot.

CHAPTER IV.

SKEEM FER A SMILE.

"Cy," sighed Bob, "et is too bad."

"Et shur is," I chipped back. "He was a good feller."

"One ov ther noblest works ov nature," orated Bob, sollum.

"A type ov ther true gentleman," I put in. "He was a white man, Bob."

"He shur enough was," Bob agreed. "Ther good an' ther beautiful dies young, Cy."

"And we don't know what minnit our turn will come," said I. "This is a sollum minnit, Bob. I feel as if I had lost a brother."

And so we kept et up, back and forth, fer some minutes, sayin' all ther pooty things about ther late lamented that we could think of, and all ther crowd list'nin, open-mouthed.

By'm by Bob kem to ther p'int.

"I don't know ov a feller that I'd rather drink ther health ov," he asserted, loud enough fer all to take it in.

"Nur me," said I. "He wur plum sure one ov earth's noblemen, and it would be my pleasure ter drink to his long and peaceufest repose."

We looked at ther actin' mayor almost out 'loud, but he didn't bite.

"We knew him in life, we honor him in death," parsoned Bob.

"That's what we, by gosh, do," I chimed after. "I well remember ther last time we drunk with him."

"Don't mention et," sighed Bob. "It makes me feel sadder'n ever, and my mouth waters with fond remembrance ther same as my eyes now water with sympathy fer these hyer people ov Sawbuck Cit."

"And yet he was one that never took water in his life."

"And never asked anybody else ter take water, nuther."

"No; his was whisk, every time, and a full three finger pull."

"And allus straight."

"Never fail."

"Too bad."

"Alas!"

He heaved a couple ov fetchin' sighs, and we looked at ther actin' mayor in a way ter melt a heart ov stone.

"Ther is no doubtin' he's dead?" Bob came up again.

"Oh, no; he's dead hard enough," opined Gila Gabe.

"We don't need no proof ov et," said Bob. "Et is plain he's not hisself any more."

"Ef he wasn't," said I, ketchin' on ter what Bob meant, "he would ask us what we'd take, and 'a' crossed glasses with us."

"And just about this time ov day would suit him to death," said Bob.

"No, ef thar was one spark ov life he would rise up in his box hyer say, 'Set 'em up to ther Cross Crick boys!'"

"Too bad he's dead!" now chipped Hop Wilson, ther feller I have be quoted, him that p'posed ther cheers us on our arrival.

Bob had made up his mind to hav drink to ther health ov ther defunct, needed it to keep up fer the occasion.

I noted that he was gettin' speckled behind ther ears, and that a sure sign that his angry passion risin'.

"Yas," said Bob, "et by gosh is, friend; and it's likewise too bad thet mantle hain't fallen onto worthy shadders, ez et wur, a worthy successor."

I looked fer squalls, then; but n wur forthcomin'. Gila Gabe stood me'er'n Moses.

Mebby he didn't git on to ther full nifercashun ov my pard's cuttin' rem about him.

Thar we stood like two by g statchers, one ov us Bolivar and t other Napoleon, both togged out in ther greatness ov glory and pomp, they not knowin' enough to ask us refresh.

Et was raspin' on sensitive nery I'm tellin' ye.

"Thar will never rise up another unto him," said I. "These hyer pec ov Sawbuck City will realize ther g loss more and more as ther days months roll by. And strangers drop in will m'ss his cheery call ter cre elbows," and I sighed loud.

Bob follered suit, and we both loo at ther actin' mayor plum p'inted.

But he never tumbled, or never let thet he did, anyhow. I laid it to feelin' yaller to'ards us.

Me and Bob onclapped hands, and turned his hoss so's ter face ther lamented, and he bent down and t ther defunct mayor by ther hand, shook it some hearty.

I couldn't do other than foller his le not wantin' to seem distant to ther d man.

"Gunsight John," said Bob, "yor be missed."

"You are missed a'ready," I echoed.

We shook him warm.

"You had a soul, you had," said Bo

"And it was as white as ther dow fleece ov lambs," said I.

"This honest hand was a power in ti cause ov right, and a mighty fo against evil and wrong," said Bob.

"And this hyer one was its mat said I, shakin' it in a way ter threat shake him out ov his wooden ca entirely. "Et was a lifter, when et w forth."

"Good-by, good man!" said Bob, sh in' plenty hard.

"Farewell!" said I, shakin' plenty n self.

"Peace to yer ashes!" said Bob.

"Repose to yer bones," said I.

"Long life to ye over thar!"

"Whar thirst is unknown."

With that we guv a final shake, fet a couple or three rousin' sighs apie and laid down his hands as we fou 'em.

Then we straightened up and fac ther throng, which by that time w reg'lar jam, fer et seemed as if ther blame poppylashun ov ther camp crowded in.

We had before that replaced our hats, if I have forgot to mention t fact.

But that's ov no moment.

When we looked around, ther cro

et fer granted that we had finished leave-takin', and so we had. Now, that's what I call plum white ther people ov Cross Crick," spoke our friend in need—him they called Wilson. I might say, our friend, somebody else agreed with him, and somebody else with that one, till purty it was clear that we had ther sym-ny ov that crowd all our own way, as we had gone, so fur, and me and sorter perked up a bit and looked actin' mayor scornful. Yes, that's what I call real hand-ne," said Mr. Wilson further, and he ke with feelin'. "I think et would proper fer us citerzens ter ask ther ts up ter take somethin'." That's what's ther matter!" piped every bum in that hull crowd, in a ction ov while not worth mentionin'. her moshun prevailed. hat thar crowd surged to ther bar in ay that went to indycate that me and b wouldn't be in et if we didn't git gait on. We moseyed with ther rest and fell with ther procession, and ranged our sses side by side at ther end ov ther , and thar we all stood fer a few sec- ds, waitin'. Ther bar-keep was lookin' ter see who d made ther call. "Whose order is this?" he spoke up. Ther silence wuz awful. My pard was by this time clean gone spurt. He was spotted nigh about as bad as ever seen him in my long 'quaintance th him. I noted his jug'lar swellin', while that ar silence prevailed, and when his cha- in got up to a sartain pitch he blurted it: "Ther town ov Sawbuck is goin' ter and et, or by gosh we won't serve as burners! Ther camp ov Cross Crick d'n't send us over hyer ter be treated abby, yer kin gamble." "Yas, ov course," chimed in our friend deed—'cause he was our friend in need. What aire ye thinkin' about, Gila be, after ther honer this hyer camp s shown ter you, not ter ask ther gents ter wet their whistles, after their long de? Ain't it ther camp's treat, fel- rs?"

CHAPTER V.

SAL CUDDYLOOP CHIPS IN.

Gila Gabe wur flanked. He was 'tween vo fires, ez et wur. We had him on one hip, so ter speak, and his town had him on t'other. Ye see, et wur like this: We had ound favor in ther sight ov ther people, and ther people had done him recent onor. We could see that he hated us wuss'n zen, 'cause we wur togged out more orjus 'n what he was, but ther crowd avin' taken to us, he had ter swoller is chagrin. "Yer pardon, boys," Gila chirped up uick enough. "I was reflectin' sadly on ther beautiful character ov ther ead. I was lost fer ther moment in a ort ov dream ov admirashun. Set 'em p, Ben, sartain' set 'em up; what are e thinkin' about not ter?" Thet thar little speak saved ther actin' mayor's bacon fer him, I'm tellin' ye et id; ther bottles wur sot out quicker, and not a galoot thar but filled three gers. Hop Wilson took nearer four. When all wur ready, thar was a pause if et was 'spected that somebody had

orter say somethin', and somehow they all looked at me and Bob.

I looked at Bob, and he looked at me, a way we had, and it gen'ly didn't take but one look, in ordinary matters, ter come to a clear onderstandin' in ther af- fair in p'int. Bob was ter make ther speak this time.

"Hyer's to ther health ov Gunsight John," he said, holdin' up his glass ov jig-juice and takin' a squint through et. "May his repose be sweet, may his fu- cher be bright, and may his recepshun over thar be ov ther warmest kind."

"Them's my sentymints, too," said I. "May ther fires ov eteraul friendship ever blaze bright fer him."

And with that we crooked and drunk. Et was movin'.

Bob then wiped his mouth on one of his black furbelows in front, me doin' ditter, and we drawed away from ther bar to 'low ther second edition ter form in line.

In backin', Bob's hoss touched ther coffin and kem mighty by gosh close to turnin' et over and spillin' its contents, but some fellers that stood near grabbed holt onto et and saved what mought 'a' been a shameful castatrophy then and thar.

"Keerful, Bob!" said I.

"Let him git out ov ther way!" growled Bob, soter vashay.

"This hyer mob would lynch us in a minit, ef anything wur ter go by der- fault," said I.

"Ther crowd is all right," said Bob. "All we have got ter do is ter keep our off eye on Gila Gabe. He is feelin' sorter ring-streak an' speckled in our behaff." "We'll try ter even up with him," I allowed.

Jest at that minnit we heard a woman's falsetter voice in ther region ov ther doors.

"Whur's them two fellers?" she piped up, like a parrot that had been sufferin' with ther croup. "Whur's them two galoots from Cross Crick— Ah! thur ye be, hey?"

And she havin' spotted us out, made straight fer our direction.

Me an' Bob looked at each other.

"Who is she?" asked Bob, sorter skart.

"Blame ef I know," said I, mebbly some skarter.

We're both mort'ly feerd ov wimmin, is me and Bob, I'll admit right hyer.

"Who is et?" Bob asked ov our friend Wilson, him thet had took four fingers on ther treat, and thet looked as if he could take four more on sight.

"That?" said he, "why that's Sal Cud- dyloop."

"What kin she want ov us?" Bob asked him.

"Mebby wants ter marry one ov ye," intimated ther feller.

"Jumpin' Gilroy!" gasped Bob.

"Jeeruzlum and Antiock!" said I.

Thar was no chance ter say more.

Sal Cuddyloop was by that time right onto us.

"You aire ther fellers I want ter see," she was a-sayin' as she kem. "You aire jest ther chaps that kin help me out, ef ye only will. And I know that ye won't refuse a pore widder—"

"Bob," said I, hoarse to ther lips, "she's goin' ter p'pose!"

"She by gosh needn't," cried Bob, skart.

We looked to ther rear, ter see ef thar was a way out, but thar wasn't, onless we took ther winders.

"Et is only a small favor that I want ter ask ov yer," she continnered, "and I know that ye can't refuse."

She had by that time gained ther spot whar we stood.

Everybody had made way for her; we had noted that.

She looked every inch a Amazon, I'm tellin' ye.

She was big and strong, had her hair twisted up in a big knot behind, out ov which stuck a switch about a foot long, like ther brush ov a cow's tail.

Her face was big and freckled, and she had a mole on her chin half as big as a pecan. She was none too clean, and thar was a sort ov a gin blear in her off eye as she looked us in ther faces.

"What kin we do, fair lady?" says I.

I lifted my tall hat as I said it, and you'd orter seen her smile. Et was like ther sweet grin ov a hyener.

"That is ther proper question, fair belle ov Sawbuck!" chipped in my pard, comin' bravely to my support. "You have only ter say ther word, and so shall et be unto ye."

I thought that that was goin' too fur.

We didn't know what her request was goin' ter be.

"That is ter say, if it is anything that we kin do in reason," I made haste to amend.

"Oh! it is easy and simple, and it will be ther greatest favor ter me," she chirruped, like ther birdie she wur. "I seen ye when ye rode inter town, and I said to myself, said I—Thar's yer chance, Sal Cuddyloop, and ef you don't go forth and seize 'pon et you aire a fule."

My heart was all a-flutter, and I knowed that Bob's was ther same, fer ther spots back ov his ears wur a-waver- in' like ther flickerin's ov a rorryboral- lus on a winter's night.

We found afterwards, by talkin' et over, that ther same thought had hit us both at ther same minnit, that she was goin' ter go fer one ov us on ther strength ov its bein' leap year, but which one she had her designs settled upon, we couldn't guess.

Likewise, too, we laid it all to our plum gorjus array ov mournin', an' thought et was that thet had captyvated her—and so et had, as it turned out, but not in ther way we dreaded.

"Say on, fair maid!" said Bob, in faint whisper.

"Lisp forth ther wust!" said I.

She lisped.

"As soon as I seed ye," said she, "I said to myself, said I—Thar's salvashun fer ye, Sal Cuddyloop, as I said; and I hastened ter slick up a bit and kem right over hyer to see ye. My name is Sal Cuddyloop, widow ov ther late Lunk Cud- dyloop—as my departed pard was called. Gila Gabe, why don't ye interdoose me? Whar's yer manners?"

She turned her glance onto Gila in a way that made him turn sorter measley. "Sartain, sartain," he flustered. "Gents, this hyer leddy is ther widder ov ther mentioned Lunk Cuddyloop, what killed hisself 'bout a year ago ter git rid ov—ov—ov—life—"

"Not bein' man enough ter stand up to ther rack," chipped in ther Amazon. "Et was a misfit, when I married him, anyhow. I throwed myself away on him, and when I would take 'casion to remind him ov ther fact, he would git riled, and then I would have ter lick him ter bring him to time. But, that's nuther here nur thar. Go on, Gila, go on."

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT SAL WANTED.

Ther actin' mayor was plum gaboo'd. He begun ter stutter an' stumole wuss'n a young Lockenvar gittin' down

to poppin' ther question fer ther fust time.

"Spit et out! spit et out!" the gentle gazelle urged him on. "Don't git rattled jist 'cause a lady asks a favor ov yer, fer mercy sakes. You men makes me tired."

"I was goin' ter say," said the actin' mayor, "that I don't happen ter recollect ther gentlemen's names—"

"Bob Horner," spoke up my pard, comin' to his rescue.

"Cy Johnson," I follered suit.

"Glad ter know ye, glad ter know ye," chipped the little kitten, in a pussy-like way. "Shake, ef ye don't mind!" and she offered a number seventeen hand to each ov us.

We shook et haff hearty.

"As I was goin' ter say," she then continnered, "ther minnit that I sot eyes on ye I knowed et was my last chance, and hyer I be, accordin'. Now, what I want ter know is jest this: Ye see, while Gunsight John and me wasn't actooly engaged, that ain't ter say that we moughtn't 'a' been ef he had lived, fer I was settin' my cap fer him—the which same I speak right out without fear or favor, fer I am a woman that don't do nothin' ter be 'shamed ov'."

She glared around as if ter challenge anybody ter say that she was, and nobody said et, you bet!

They wilted under her glance like as ter grass under ther breath ov a sor-okker.

Me and Bob 'changed glances, bein' still in ther dark.

What was that ter us, and where was we at? we both wanted to know.

"But that's nuther here nur thar," she chirruped again, purty presently. "What I want ter know is jest this: Ye see, seein' that we mought 'a' been engaged, ef he had lived long enough, I feel that it is my bounden dooty, ter some 'stent, anyhow, ter show out my grief fer his goneness, and fer that reason, if fer no other, I sorter orter conduct myself accordin', don't you think so yerselves?"

Me and Bob wur plum dumfuzzled.

What in ther mischief wur she comin' around to, anyhow? How did she make out thet we wur her sallyvashun, as she had said?

I looked at Bob, and he looked at me, and ther crowd wur all lookin' on as still as ther dead man in ther box behind us. We felt like two blame fools, not knowin' what wur comin'.

We nodded that we thort so, anyhow.

"Ov course," said she. "That is jist ther p'int. Now, what I want ter know is jist this: Ye see, ther minnit that I seen ye I knowed ye would be glad ter render me ther simple service, and so, as I said, I slicked up a bit and pranced right over hyer—"

"Miss," said Bob, clean gone frazzled, "in ther name ov Goshaway come to ther p'int. What kin we do fer ye?"

"Yes, tell us," I chipped in, "and if it is anything that we kin do—"

"Oh! you can do it, and you'll be glad to, I know. What I want ter know is jest this: Ye see, it was—"

"Blushin' damsel," said my pard, "stop right whar you be."

She stopped.

Bob was sorter recoverin' from his skar.

"You have come ter that p'int several times, and mebbly ye hadn't better pass et this time. Better tell us ther wust and done with et."

"I second ther moshun, timid lass," said I, sorter ketchin' et from Bob, and perkin' up a trifle. "Thar is nothin' so killin' as surspense, and if you hold us

any longer on this ragged edge, no knowin' what ther kornsekence will be."

"See hyer," she fired up, and she 'minded me ov a she wildcat gittin' raspy, "be you tryin' ter poke fun at me?"

"Bless yer, no!" cried Bob.

"Not fer all ther world!" cried I.

"Wull, ye hadn't better; that's all! I ain't no blushin' damsel, ner no timid lass, as mebbly you will find out when ye come ter know me better. I am a straight out widdy-woman, with no frills about me. Bear that in mind. Now, what I want ter know is jist this: Ye see, when I seed ye comin', as I said, togged out in all this black goods, said I to myself, said I—They kin as well as not spare me a triffe of et, enough ter show my feelin's to ther world on this sad and sollum occasion, and—"

Bob fell a-gaspin' and I ter swollerin' a lump in my throat.

"She shur wants ter borry our mournin'," said Bob, in aksents wild and full ov 'larm.

"She shure does," I gaspered. "She mought jest as well ask us fer our wads, or, what's wuss'n that, our good names, and be done with et. Madam, what ye ask is onpossible."

"Ye don't mean ter refuse?" she cried, plum dazed.

"We have ter," said Bob, sollum.

"We shur do," said I.

"But, think of et!" she wailed. "Hyar I be, and not a yard ov mournin' ter be had in ther hull camp, and what am I ter do? Surely, you kin spare me ther streamers from yer hosses' tails."

"Nary a stream," declined Bob.

"Positiv," I seconded.

"Then a yard or so from what's on yer hats, I beg ov ye."

"And what would ther camp ov Cross Crick say?" I asked her. "Ther only reason we ain't got more, is 'cause we got all thar was."

"But, think ov me," she growed desprut. "How kin I 'pear as a mourner with nothin' ter mourn in? Ther best I have got is only gingham, thanks ter that wuthless Lunk Cuddyloop, and—"

"See hyer," Bob interrupted.

"Wull," sez she.

"You wasn't married to ther late lamented Gunsight, wuz ye?"

"Well, no; but that's nuther here nur thar."

"That does away with ther need fer fust mournin', then," declared Bob. "Ye wasn't even 'gaged to him, I think ye said."

"Well, no; but, that's nuther here nur thar. We had come to—"

"Let me have my say," put in Bob. "That does away with ther need fer second mournin', I take et. Mebbly he hadn't even begun ter shine up to ye, and ef that—"

"That is none ov your business," she fired sassy. "I told ye that I was sorter settin' my cap fer him, and no tellin'—"

"That is jest it," rung in Bob. "What you need is about third mournin', I take et. Go an' let down yer ha'r and drape yerself in a hoss blanket, and you will do prime—"

That thar crowd let out a bust ov lafter that shook ther shanty, and that old gal colored up like ary carrot. She made a flew at my pard, with her claws ready fer biz, I'm mentionin', and he had ter whip out a gun ter check her in her mad kareer.

"Don't yer do et, lady," Bob gently warned.

"He has 'sulted me!" she cried, turnin' and 'pealin' ter me.

"He didn't mean ter," said I, ter cool

her down a bit. "He don't have 'quired better."

"Drape myself in a hoss blanket, whcoped, givin' a jump thar, her ha'r come down. "Third ter command is it? Look out that thar, on we bring v murnin' fer you, that's all! fer ther hu

"Bob," said I, turnin' onto like I was mad clean through, amazed at yer, ter speak so hyer widder. Ther best thing do is ter offer 'pollygy, rig 'cause et ain't our'n—"

"Ain't your'n?" cried ther A. "Ov course not!" owned up E. aire hyer as a dellygashun fr Crick, and this hyer drapin' ye bulk ov sorer that is sent o faint 'spression ov ther sympa camp ov Cross Crick feels fer City in her time ov trial and What's more, ef I have said any rankle yer fner feelin's, dear humbly chaw dirt."

She was mollyfied ter onct, down her rumpled feathers. Af more palaver she took her depart relief ov ther crowd, et 'peared

Then we found oppertoonty turn to ther main biz ov ther d we wanted ter l'arn what had bee ez we wur comin' inter town.

That hadn't slipped our minds.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT WAS AMISS.

However, my pard had someth on his mind that demanded more jit attention.

Ther 'citement ov ther mome sorter 'vaporated ther flavor ov th bibe he had tooken, and he kalk that it was time fer another.

"Fer ther luv ov mercy," he "let's take another sip. That man has so onsot my narves that most fergit what we aire hyer want somethin' ter take ther tas ov my mouth."

Et was a gentle hint.

Our friend Wilson—him ov ther finger capacity, he made haste ter ther moshun.

Everybody else took moshun fer counter, and thar they ranged selves before you could say scat ther bar-keep was ready to sarve soon as ordered.

"Is et a go, Gila Gabe?" he inquek.

"Ov course et's a go," chimed out Wilson. "Ef thar ever was a time et orter be free, this hyer is ther

At that ther hull crowd voted in 'firmtyve, and thar was nothin' fer ter do but order et up. He was loy fer honor, ye see, and he had ter sails to ther wind that blowed.

So he said et was a go, and et goe act

Hop took four fingers again, good, smacked his chops as if he wur goode four more.

Me and Bob wiped our mouths on, mournin', and then we sallyed inter immejit biz on hand. Bob guv me a ter take ther lead, and I braced up said:

"Now, men ov Sawbuck, we hope our comin' hyer ain't in no way delay anything that ye have got sot down yer day's program. We aire hyer to part in anything that offers, and wa ov ter uphold ther reppytashun ov Crd Crick on this hyer 'casion."

Thar was a murmur ov approval, a Bob nodded et was good and fer me it pursued.

I pursseed:

"Ez we hove in sight over ther ridge on our comin' hyer, et 'peared to us somethin' was amiss hyer, and we would

He don't have 'quired what et was ef
hoss bla in't crowded 'pon us so thick.
mp that yer to offer our services, as I
"Third anything that we kin do, ye
thar ter command us. That is ther
's all! on we bring with us."
n' onto fer ther hull camp ov Cross
through fell to ther actin' mayor to
peak se the sort ov 'sponse, and we had
t thinge diskivered that he wasn't at
y, rig speechin'.

ther A camp ov Sawbuck thanks ye
ed up he said, but his looks guv ther
hun fr under his skin. "That is ter
in' ye ank ther people ov Cross Crick.
sent o now as thar is anything ye kin
sympa of thar is we kin let yet know.
ls fer we thank ye, gents."
l and have come hyer to be chief
id any s fer our town, ye know," spoke
dear ard.

onct, we aire ready fer any service,"
s. Af t we aire minus is a parson,"
depar Hop Wilson.
ared arson?"

onerty nary a sky pilot in ther camp."
her d r's ther one at Holiday?" I axed.
d bee e away, and can't be had, and we
vn. t none hyer as can even say
inds to yearth an' dust ter dust."
have sent off ter Cross Crick fer
though, and hope he will be hyer
I," said Gila Gabe.

meth aire in hard luck," I had to ad-
more Ther preacher over thar is sick
d can't git out, except to his own

So that is what was ruffin'
ome blic mind when we kem in sight,
ov th feller cits?"
kalk just that an' nothin' else."
t thar ary one hyer kin play par-
he y a one," was ther sad rejoinder.
tha ain't a galoot in ther camp knows
er f of gospel or psalm book."
tas br, benighted people!" exclaimed
rd.

ay not omit et?" I suggested.
her hat would a funeral be without a
er s?" cried Gabe.

ull, that's so!" said I, but ef you
fer charge and make a rousin' orashun,
d trter satersfy most folks."

cat: orter paled at ther word orashun;
e ery ijee weakened him.
vasn't figgerin' on et," he said, sor-
nqueek.

out: ll ye what," spoke up Bob; "hyer
he pard—he is ther silver-tongued or-
tivy Cross Crick, the Chauncey De-
in v—"

er 6ftly, Bob," said I; "yer treadin' on
lody thin ice!"

semd if ye want yer defunct mayor
off prime grand, jest let him do ther
goe act fer ye," he continnered. "Ef
d, n't git a parson, somethin' has got
ode done."

fo; I'll do et myself," whirled in
n, stubborn as ary mule.
r t see, he was lookin' fer office.
l wanted ter be mayor fer all ther
o, and ther bee was buzzin' in his
ut bad.

t he allowed us ter come in thar and
ayther hull funeral, what would his
le think ov him? They would think
t as a weak stick to support ther dig-
va ov Sawbuck Cit.

rd that is right, sir," said I. "I gree
ye, full up. Still, if ye find ye need
afer anything, I'll chirp my chune fer
t et is worth."

All right, I'll remember," said Gabe.
And as fer a parson," I added.
g What 'bout et?"

Why, hyer is my pard," jerkin' my
umb at Bob; "he is no slouch at ar-

gyin' doctrin', and he was oncet a justice
ov ther peace and has 'ministered no end
ov oaths. He will do, prime!"

"That so?" chirped in Hop Wilson.
Bob was smilin' modest.

"Ov course et's so," said I. "Dy'e
s'pose fer a minnit that I would tell ye
so ef et wasn't?"

"Then he is jest ther man we want!"
cried Hop. "What d'ye say, boys? This
hyer lets us out nice, and if we can't
have ther real article in a parson, we
must take what we kin git."

"That's ther talk!" whooped ther
crowd.

Bob was in fer et, shure enough!
He looked daggers at me, but that
didn't alter ther fact a bit, and I had ter
grin ter think what a figger he would
cut.

"Well, what is ther program?" I
asked.

Then I whispered ter Bob:
"Pard, we have got this hyer thing all
our own way. Cross Crick is goin' ter
have the full honor ov ther 'casion."

"Et shur is," said Bob, "and ther dis-
honor, too, when bustin' time comes."

"Thar'll be none," said I.

"You'll see," said he.

"What d'ye mean?" I asked him.

"What do I know about preachin' a
sarmount?" he demanded.

"Wull, what ye don't know, guess at,"
I advised him. "We aire hyer to do this
thing up brown, and we must do et."

He jumped his shoulders, but said
nothin' more, and by that time ther act-
in' mayor was ready to respond ter my
question, so we ceased our whisperin'
and paid 'tention to him.

"Wull, we wanted ter have a grand
parade, ther fust thing," he said, "car-
ryin' ther dead mayor around ther camp
a couple ov times, stoppin' finally out
hyer in front ter have ther speechin', but
when we got word that ther parson was
not ter be had, et knocked us out."

"No need ter," said my pard. "Let's
carry out ther program, and ye kin lean
hard on Cy Johnson hyer fer all ther
help ye want when et comes to speech-
in'."

He was gittin' in 'venge fer my 'lectin'
him parson.

Ther crowd took et up, and thar was
nothin' else ther actin' mayor could do
but comply with ther demand ov his
people.

So, accordin', ther arrangements wur
begun, and thar was started one ov ther
greatest funerals ever seen, I'm bettin'.
We had sized up ther actin' mayor, so
ter say, and whar in we had found him
weak, we resolved to be strong.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARIN' THER PROGRAM.

We wur then ready ter leave ther she-
bang.

My pard thought et would be right and
proper ter imbibe oncet more 'fore we
vamoosed.

Hop Wilson was ready fer that, ter
say nothin' ov ther rest ov ther crowd,
and when Hop had put away four good
fingers more, and all ther rest three on
ther average, folks wur beginnin' ter feel
good.

Then we moved to'rds ther door.

Ther crowd streamed out ahead ov us,
havin' crowded in 'pon us after we had
entered.

When we reached ther door we took off
our tall hats and held 'em most sollum
respectful while we passed out, and oncet
outside we put 'em on again.

Them 'ar hats guv us a heap ov dig-
nity.

"Now, what?" asked my pard.

"I'm by gosh stuck," said I back.

"But we musn't be," said he. "We
must keep ther ball rollin'. Thar is
plenty ov good whisk in this hyer town,
ter be had free all day, ef we kin work et
right, and et must be worked."

"You aire goin' ter git corned, that's
what you ar' goin' ter do," I 'monstrated
with him.

"I'm not a-goin' ter fight ag'in et," sez
he.

"You're a hog," said I.

"An' you're my pard," sez he.

"Et is all you think about," I told him.

"An' you are allus on hand ter second
my moshun," he shot back.

Et was no use argyin' a simple thing
like that, so we let et drop and guv 'ten-
tion to ther actin' mayor.

He was struttin' around thar in his
mournin' sash like ary gobler on state
parade, and thought he was cuttin' some
feather, when he couldn't hold a candle
to us.

"Wull, mayor, what's ther word?" I
asked him.

"Ther grand parade, ov course," he
said. "Wasn't that understood inside?"

"Et shur was," said my pard.

"Ther grand parade et is," said I.

"You will be ther marshal, ov course,
Gila Gabe?"

"Wull, I ruther opine I will," he said
with some feelin'. "You two don't want
ter fergit that I am ther head ov things
hyer."

"Shur not," said Bob.

"That is all right," said I. "All we
aire hyer fer is ter represent Cross Crick
and do what little we kin to help make
things go off nice."

"That is right," said Bob. "Don't
think fer a minnit, mayor, that we want
ter rob you ov any ov ther honor that is
your'n ov right. Bless you, not a bit ov
it."

That seemed ter mollyfy him.

"Yer want yer hoss," said I. "Ther
marshal must be mounted."

"Yas, that's so," said he. "I thort
somethin' was lackin'."

He forthwith sent a feller ter fetch
ther same.

"We will want a platform or somethin'
ov that kind out hyer," said my pard
then.

"Yas, that is one thing we have
'ranged fer," said Gila. "Et is all ready,
all but ther puttin' up. Hustle, boys,
and fetch her forth."

"Don't think we aire meddlin'," said I.

"We want ter see this hyer funeral a
rousin' big success, and we aire your
servants ter command in anything we
kin say or do."

Et was hard fer ther cuss ter keep
rankled, even if he did hate us wuss'n
pizen.

Ther platform was brought out and sot
up.

Et was something decent.

Ther carpenters ov ther mines had
made et, and et was substanshul and ov
good 'pearance.

"What d'ye think ov it?" asked Gila
Gabe.

"Et is some shakes," said I, meanin'
thet et wur purty elegant.

"I would like ter drink to ther health
ov ther fellers what made et," said my
pard.

"Me too!" yauped out Hop Wilson.

Ther rest ov ther bums ov ther camp
thirdded ther moshun, and they all made
a rush fer ther Gilt Edge.

Ther actin' mayor put ther veto to et
that time, howsumever, mighty suddent.

He called out that thar wasn't no treat ordered, and that checked ther stampede.

"You'll git inter trouble yet," said I ter my pard.

"I'll take you with me ef I do," said he.

"That is what I'm kickin' about," said I.

"And I'll rely on you ter git me out," he said funder.

"An' I'm blamed if I don't let ye stay thar, ef I have ter stay with ye," said I.

By ther time the platform had been finished off nice, and et hadn't taken long ter do et, ther actin' mayor's hoss was on hand.

Gila Gabe got inter ther saddle, and he looked pooty decent, I have ter admit, with his wide black sash in contrast with his flamin' red shirt, but he couldn't proach us.

Then ther time was at hand.

Ther actin' mayor picked out six stout fellers, and told 'em ter fetch forth ther corpus.

They went and fetched, comin' out bearin' ther coffin in their arms, and when they got et outside they swung et up to their shoulders and wur ready.

"Now," called ther mayor, "fall in line, ye galoots!"

"Hold on," said my pard.

"What's ther matter now?"

"Ain't thar no moosic in this hyer town?"

"What do yer want with moosic?" was ther amazed demand ter oncet.

"Et would give tone to ther 'casion ef thar could be a funeral march, or somethin' like that," said Bob.

"That's so," said I. "Can't ye scare up somethin' mayor?"

"I dunno as thar is anything in town," said Gila.

Et sorter tickled him ter call him mayor. Et seemed ter fall on his ears like ther sweet note ov a tinklin' symbol.

"Even a juicharp w'u'd do," said Bob.

"Ha! I have et," cried our friend in need, Wilson.

"Er juicharp?" asked Bob.

"Naw; better'n that."

"What is et?"

"Lippy Doozberry's 'corjun."

"A 'corjun!" cried Bob. "That is jest ther chawk!"

"Bring et forth," said I. "Lippy, git yer 'corjun, and fall in line hyer."

I looked around fer him, not knowin' Lippy Doozberry from ther fust cousin ov Adam.

A sorter silly-lookin' half-wit came to ther front, grinnin' like ary ape with a tickled consuns, so ter say.

"Shill I git 'er?" he asked the mayor.

"Will et be right and proper?" asked ther mayor, 'pealin' ter me.

"Right and proper!" I 'sclaimed at him. "Nothin' ye kin do could be any righter or properer. Did ye ever hear ov a great man havin' a funeral without moosic? Look at Neepolyun, look at Ginrul Grant, look at—"

"We'll have ther moosic," said Gila. "Lippy, git yer 'corjun and foller after me. Play ther most becomin' chune ye know."

Lippy wur tickled ter death.

Away he went on ther run, and while he wur gone we formed line.

Ther mayor took first place, then we left a place fer Lippy, and after him wur me and Bob.

Right behind us kem ther bearers with ther late defunct, and then ther vox popply, so ter say, ad infin ad indiscrim—or words to that effect; don't bother to look et up.

Thar was only one thing lackin', and that was ther moosic.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GRAND PARADE.

Lippy Doozberry soon put in his appear.

He was luggin' a monster big accorjun in his arms, and had put on a coat that had belonged to his dad, and which was several sizes too big fer him and almost trailed in ther dust.

An' darn me ef thar didn't come Sal Cuddyloop, too, with her hair all a-streamin', same as my pard had told her to wear et, but she didn't have ther hoss blanket. In place ov that she had put on a black coat that evidently had belonged to her late pardner.

Ther coat was sizes too small fer her, and she filled et almost to ther bustin'.

Sal was no airy fairy, be et known.

She tipped ther beam at nigher three hundred than two, I'm bettin'.

Yes, along she kem, and she crowded in right after ther bearers, and then she sung out to ther crowd:

"Now, then, let 'er go. I am hyer ter show my 'spects to ther man that mought 'a' filled ther place ov Lunk Cuddyloop, ef I had only had a fairer chance at him."

She surveyed that throng, as if challengin' any one ter dispute her rights.

Nobody done so.

Meantime, Lippy Doozberry had taken his place right after ther actin' mayor.

He had now unbuckled his 'corjun, and with a smile on his homely mug that was like unto ther flow ov fat over a warm griddle he touched et up a bit to see if et was in chune.

Not bein' up in moosic, I'm not p'pared ter say et was or et wasn't. Et seemed ter me to have a disjinted come-ter-gether some'rs in ets tone.

"Now, then, Lippy," sung out my pard, "give us ther best ye know."

"And make et worthy ther 'casion," said I.

"All ready?" called ther marshal.

"Let 'er go!"

"For'd, march!"

With that, Gila waved his hand and started.

Lippy struck up a chune on ther 'corjun and pranced after him, steppin' proud.

Then kem ther 'traction ov ther pro-seshun—me and my pard, our hosses aprancin' and our plumes and streamers a-noddin' and a-wavin' too durn purty ter menshun.

After us follered ther bearers, with ther dead mayor on their shoulders in his long box, keepin' step and walkin' sollum and slow, and after them wur that thar Amazon, wringin' her hands and wavin' her arms by turns, in a sort ov hired wailer fashun.

And ther moosic—wull, now, et jist beat ther band!

That is ter say, et would ef et hadn't been fer ther chune ther feller played.

Et was anything but a sollum air, bein' nothin' more nor less than that good old-time mellydy that everybody in ther world knowed 'fore he was born—"When Johnny Comes Marchin' Home."

But that made no difference.

Ther crowd was jist in ther humor fer et.

They soon fell inter time with their feet, and purty soon with their tungs as well.

My pard was ther first to set up ther singin', which he done with some credit to himself and honor to Cross Crick, fer Bob has a voice.

Ther hull crowd took up ther air, and in a brief spell ov while thar was sech a bust ov song as would have done credit to a Chinese carnyvul—if ye happen ter know anything about that.

"What do yer think ov it jist ther paused long enough ter say teov ther bo."

"Et is clean plum gorjus," ter ov ther him. "We couldn't do better ttle, and et made ter order."

"I 'gree with yer," said Bobther longer.

"Gunsight orter be a proudey imbibe"

remarked. "er higher"

"No doubt he would be, efall wur"

behold us in this toggery," said to his fe

"Then yer think he can't? Id see h"

him. "a new"

"And him dead!" sneered Bpeech, an

"I mean from ther speerehether he"

Bob."

"Speeret world? Cy, ef he happed to t"

any sech world as that, he is er ther bu

ly corned by this time, and he forth th

a hoss from a borro." e ary blan

"Yer don't git on," said I, with, but n

"I mean ter ask ye ef ye don't s plum ga

knows what is goin' on hyer, fed at Bob

place whar he's at, ther place ovs goin' t

parted?" id we kno

"Don't yer s'pose ther smok

ther vision hazy?" sez he.

"You're a fool," sez I.

"Admitted, pard," sez he, WORATIN' T

on ther "pard." actin' m

As ther singin' was beginnin' with ther

little by that time, me an' Band kem o

forth oncet more, full force. n one foc

So we went up ther gulch, tome mor

popylashun ov ther camp in as red a

all a-singin' ready ter bust thernocked

me and Bob bearin' ther brunt a blizz

sorrer. and did r

Et wuz as sollum as could becase.

Bym'by et dawned upon us t somethi

band had changed ther chune. cried on

We, bein' in ther front, wur hid no 'sid

slight discord that was made 'twat aire y

'corjun and ther voices. another

We wur still marchin' Johnnydown!

but Lippy Doozberry had switc—felle

onter "Comin' Thro' Ther Ryer pore

natcherly the two chunes didis a s—

mernize wuth a persimmon. k City.

Bob an' me held up our hands our d

lence. pray!" y

Ther singin' stopped, and thn', Gabe

started et goin' again on ther rigs found

And that fashion we went, to tld fer Ga

its ov ther camp on ther west, aet had

we turned and paraded back ag mough

off to their limits on ther east, ad, fer

et up.

By ther time we got back to the begun te

ov startin' et was high noon, at more, a

hull crowd wur so dry with singi to the

they seconded my pard's moshu d, and t

man, and fer ther next ten minnt n mann

Gilt Edge did a prime rushin' bu lot.

I tell ye. pursp

Ther late departed had been de his fac

on ther platform without. wur jis

We had dismounted and given mad th

hosses fer feed. ht an

We stuck close to ther crowd e have

selves. eanin'

By ther way, a great dinner wa e shur

prepared, all ther wimmin ov the e your

havin' jined forces ter make et ave the

success. b, you,

Sal Cuddyloop was one ov ther bu," sa

ov ther enterprise, so she left u bu."

minnit ther parade was over, and i bu."

after ther grand orashun by ther plum

mayor we wur to dine. s on y

After ther business in ther Gilt ut, yo

was over, all hands returned to ov e

square. ht as

Thar ther actin' mayor and impa you

personages mounted ther platform hav

Me and Bob wur right in ther sett

ranks thar, you bet. l te

Thar wasn't none more 'portant 'As

Ther coffin rested on two soap bo es

rear ther front edge ov ther consa

prime decorated.

think ov 't jist ther season fer flowers, ter say teov ther boys had ornymented gorjus," Ier ov ther sarcoffygus with a do better ttle, and strewed et with old

"said Bobther longer ther time, and ther e a proudey imbibed to ther dead man's er higher ther spirits grewd.

uld be, efall wur 'sembled, ther actin' gery," said to his feet.

he can't? lld see his knees gimble.

a new thing in his kareer, ter sneered Bpeech, and we doubted mighty er speerehether he would be able ter do

y, ef he happed to ther front, thrust one at, he is er ther buzzum ov his coat and e, and he forth the other, and thar he e ary blame statcher. He opened said I, wrth, but nothin' kem forth.

ye don'ts plum gabooed.

n hyer, fed at Bob and Bob looked at me.

r place ovs goin' ter be a clean case ov id we knowed et prime shur.

her smok

he.

I.

CHAPTER X.

ez he, WORATIN' THER ORASHUN.

actin' mayor gulped like ary beginnin' with ther pip.

e an' Band kem down, and he shifted his orce. n one foot to t'other, and then he gulch, tome more.

amp in as red and white by turns, his bust themocked and gimble wuss'n a er brunt a blizzard, and he gulped and and did nothin' but gulp. Et was could becase.

on us t somethin', blast yer, say some- chune. cried one feller in ther crowd, wur hid no 'sideration fer feelin's.

made 'twat aire ye actin' mayor fer?" de- another.

Johnnydown!" yelled a third.

ad switf—feller c—c—citerzens!" stut- ter Ryer pore cuss, plum druv desprut. es didris a s—s—sollum 'casion fer- on. k City. We aire hyer ter do r handso our dead."

pray!" yauped somebody. "Keep and thn', Gabe."

her rigs found et!" from another.

nt, to tid fer Gabe!"

west, alet had a disastrous 'fect.

ack ag mought jist as well up an' shot r east, ad, fer all ther good he was after

k to th egun ter stretch his neck and gulp oon, at more, and purty scon ther gang h singi to ther fact that he was plum moshu d, and they hollered fer him to sot minni n manner onmistakable. hin' bu ot.

een de his face.

wur jist bubblin' full ov chagrin, mad that he couldn't 'a' told what

ht an' proper name wur.

r crowd was whoopin' wild.

e have got et our own way," said eanin' over and hollerin' in my ear.

e shur have," I answered him. "Et e your turn, now, ter say somethin' ave ther honor ov Cross Crick."

o, you," said Bob.

ou," said I.

ou."

plum can't," said Bob. "Et all s on you, Cy."

ut, you aire to say ther sarmount ov et," I 'minded him. "You ht as well pitch in."

you aire to do ther orate part, have got ter!"

settled et.

l ter me ter make ther try.

p, and ther crowd let up their arty soon.

I have often done a little thing

like that, et didn't stagger me any wuth a cent, and I sailed in.

I flung my head back defiant, keepin' my hat on and snappin' my black banners in ther breeze, ez et wur, and plantin' out my foot and stickin' one hand in my buzzum, I sailed in.

"Honored galoots ov Sawbuck!" I yauped at 'em. "We hev come hyer 'pon this hyer sollum 'casion, not ter bury Seezer, but ter praise him!"

"Who's Seezer?" yelled somebody.

"What has he got ter do with et?" chirped another.

"This hyer is ther funeral ov Gun-sight John, don't fergit that 'ar."

"Seezer ain't in et!"

I waved 'em scornful.

"I only spoke figgery," I told 'em. "Ef you want anything purty said ov yer defunct mayor, keep yer heads shut and hear ther oracle."

"Amen!" said my pard, sollum.

"In ther fust place," I resumed, "I feel plenty fer yer actin' mayor, so overcome with emoshun that he wasn't able ter render ther refulgent orashun thet we all know he had in mind."

Thar was some cheerin', at that.

Gila Gabe perked up a bit, seein' it had been let down easy fer him.

"And et is maybe jist as well," I continnered. "Ef he had onloaded ther sor-rer ov his buzzum to ye, all at oncet, it would have caused ye all to weep salt, sad tears, and would have rendered sad this joyous 'casion. Let us be thankful fer small blessin's as they come to us."

"Amen!" said my pard, plenty hearty.

"One ov nacher's noblemen has been called to his reward," I slung at 'em. "Whyfor should we be spillin' our weeps about that? Ruther, let us rejoice and be glad that we kin show this respeck fer his memory, and that we are left alive ter give him sech a send-off as this hyer promises to be. What more could yer mayor have asked in life? Et is sublime!"

"Et shur is," shouted my pard, with much voice.

"This is ther plum joyousest occasion ov my life!" I yauped forth in their will-ing ears: "I am proud to stand hyer, as I do, upholdin' the banner ov Cross Crick 'pon sich an event as this hyer," I rubbed under their noses. "Thar is a bond ov sympathy between these hyer two camps that should be cemented fast so's et could never be sundered. Why not cement et hyer and now? At my feet lies ther whitest mayor this hyer camp ever had—et never had but one. I am hyer to speak ov his virchews."

"Amen!" shouted my pard, and added sorter voshay: "Spread et on thick!"

Ther smell ov them thar four fingers Hop Wilson had sevrul times imbibed was makin' me feel tol'bly good, and I sallyed right in.

"What more could mortal man ask 'n what yer defunct mayor is gittin' hyer?" I demanded ov 'em, takin' off my tall hat and wavin' ther ribbons and banners around impressive. "Ter have Cross Crick stand hyer and pronounce him one ov ther grandest men that has ever lived sense ther days ov Autalycus ther Great! Ef one was great, tother was greater, as you will admit. Ef anything, this noble man," stoopin' and takin' ther defunct by ther hand, "was greater than two Autolycesses!" and I shook him impres-sive warm. "Men ov Sawbuck City, ye have cause fer rejoicin' on this hyer mo-menchus occasion!"

"Beautiful!" cried my pard, clappin' his hands tremenjous.

Thar follered sech a storm ov cheers as you never heard in all your life.

Actooly, tears wur standin' in ther eyes ov some ov that crowd, wur ready ter well forth at ther slightest biddin'. They swollered all I guv 'em.

"Words fail me, ter portray a charac-ter so beautiful," I waxed ellykent and more so. "Nothin' but ther onwritten pages ov ther vast beyond kin ever show up sech a life fer all et was worth when et went up an' down ther world among ets feller mortals. What lies before ye hyer is only ther dust and ashes ov what was oncet a man, and this hyer must perish; but his name will go ringin' adown ther aisles ov time and thunderin' ther domes and corrydurs ov memory while this hyer camp shall exist. Men of Sawbuck City, do ye fully 'preciate this moment? Do ye wholly realize ets importance? Ef ye do, let's have a drink."

With that, I salammmed wide and low, and stepped back, and felt fer my soap box with my hind foot.

"So be et!" yelled my pard, clappin' like mad.

"Second ther moshun!" yelled Hop Wilson, and he took a run and a jump off'n that platform in ther direction ov ther Gilt Edge.

"Jump" Wilson would 'a' been a bet-ter name fer him.

Others follered his lead, and thar was nothin' ther actin' mayor could do but give ther word.

Thar was only one thing my pard was afeerd ov, as he told me later on, and that was really no consarn ov ours. Et was that ther town treasury would run short ov funds.

Well, that thar platform wur emtied in a jiffy, save only by ther defunct, and the only reason he didn't foller was be-cause he wuz plum dead. Really, I felt sorry fer him, ter think what a plum gorjus affair he was missin' and all that.

Well, Hop Wilson took four full again, and the rest ov us about three on a av-erage, and by ther time that important duty was off hand, ther dinner was an-nounced, and we wur requested ter form a circle out on ther plaza, around ther platform, whar ther grub was ter be passed around. And we went and circled, needless ter say.

Fact ov ther business was, most all ov us wur beginnin' ter gyrate and circle whether we wanted to or not.

CHAPTER XI.

ALL HANDS AROUND.

Me and my pard sot down side by side. I noted that Bob's eyes wur beginnin' ter swim loose in ther sockets.

Mebby mine wur ther same, fer ther ground wur beginnin' ter upheave in a fashion most unruly, et 'peared ter me.

"Cy," said Bob.

"Sigh on," said I.

"Don't git funny," said he.

"I'll try not ter," said I.

"How do yer feel?" he asked me.

"Plum galush," I answered him.

"How do you?"

"Ditter," said he. "We aire havin' a bang up time hyer."

"I sh'u'd snigger ef we ain't," said I. "Wonder what'll be next on the pro-gram?"

"Give et up," said he. "We'll 'tend ter this part ov et first, and then we'll be fortyfied fer whatever may happen. Hyer comes ther fillin'."

Ther wimmin of ther camp wur trot-tin' around with ther provinder, and we got our share jist about then. They had gone and killed a fatted caff or two, by ther looks ov things.

Et wur some good, and ther way we laid et under our vests was a wonder ter see.

Bod is a hog, natcherly.

He says ther same ov me, but that don't count.

That is on'y 'cause he has ter say somethin' ter cover up his own short-comin's.

They wur a hungry lot, and fer a time they 'tended strickly ter business, but when they bergun ter git full they bergun ter git playful, and took ter throwin' bones around.

Hap Wilson, purty soon, throwed one that took Lippy Doozberry plum in ther neck.

Lippy got mad quicker'n scat, and throwed et back again.

It took Hop right on ther nose.

Then he got riled.

Up he jumped, and made a meander in Lippy's direction.

Lippy wur up too, same as his dander wuz, and he took a tack in ther direction ov Hapry.

I could see myself that ther ground was rollin', but et didn't 'pear ter me to be rollin' ez bad as they found et, fer they could hardly hold et down under 'em.

They went head on, with right arms drawed back at full cock all ready fer business soon's they met.

But, they didn't meet that time.

Ther ground swelled up 'tween 'em as they 'proached, and they shied off in spite ov ther'selves.

Et wuz laffybul ter see 'em, tryin' hard ter bear up to ther 'counter, but sidlin' off more an' more at every step, and when they had gone clean past they luffed.

"Try et ergin," yelled my pard.

"Better aim next time," said I.

"Round up an' fetch him quarterin'," said Gila Gabe.

"Better a heap sight git down and creep for'd," said Colonel Kittens—by ther way, has he been interdoosed?

Colonel Kittens was a feller ov some standin' in ther camp, and et had been a hot race 'tween him and Gila Gabe ter see which one should be ther actin' mayor.

"Steady, now," said Bob.

"Take yer bearin's," said I.

They stopped, and wur glarin' at each other.

Ther ground was behavin' shameful, and they could hardly keep on their pins.

"I'll chaw yer ear," said Lippy Doozberry.

"An' I'll chaw yer nose," said Hop Wilson.

"I'll l'arn yer who ye're throwin' bones at," said Lippy.

"An' I'll l'arn you better'n ter throw 'em back at me again," yauped Hop.

Havin' got about as steady as they wur likely to git, they made another try fer et, but blame me ef they could make et.

They held to ther direction purty good fer a time, but purty presently they bergun ter shy, and in their care not to shy ther same way as before, they took to fetchin' t'other side.

They tried to hold back, but et wasn't no go.

Et wasn't as wide a fetch as t'other time, but et was too wide fer any good.

Ther rest ov ther crowd whooped and yelled at 'em, and that made 'em all ther madder, and they wur madder'n wet hens ter begin with.

"I'll—I'll smite ye!" cried Lippy.

"I'll grind ye," yelled Hop.

"Yer can't do't!"

"Show yer!"

"Bah!"

They fetched up ergain, and stood gimblin' and bobbin' at each other, and ther

crowd was jist goin' plum crazy with delight.

Everybody was on their feet now, and had formed a ring around ther two plum ijjits, and ther late-lamented was fer ther time bein' clean fergot. Sawbuck had a new 'citement.

At et they went again.

This time they took better bearin's, and run up closter.

As they kem head on they both drawed back and cut a swipe at each other, but fate wur gainst 'em.

They missed, somehow, and ther force ov ther blow each had struck at t'other carried 'em off their equilib., and they went rollin' over and over on ther ground.

How ther crowd whooped et then!

"Bah! I'm disgusted with yer!" yelled ther actin' mayor.

He picked up a rock as he said et, and let drive at 'em, not carin' which one he hit.

But, jimminny! he shied wide ov ther mark and that thur stone kem bang up ergainst ther manly chest ov Colonel Kittens!

Then thar was fun, I'm whisperin'.

Thet thar Kitten bekem a roarin' tiger in one mighty minnit, and he made a run fer Gila Gabe, bellerin' like a bull.

Ther actin' mayor turned pale 'round ther gills, and looked as if he wanted ter run, but ther eyes ov all ther people wur onto him hard, and he had ter face ther moosic.

"Flingin' stones at me, are ye?" cried ther Kitten.

"I didn't go ter hit yer," said ther actin' mayor.

"But yer done et all ther same, dang ye!"

"Et slipped out'n my hand."

"That don't matter, I'm goin' ter flay ye fer et."

"You had better go slow about that thar," warned ther actin' mayor. "I don't want ter hurt ye."

"Yer couldn't do et ef ye did want to," was ther snorted 'sponse ter that. "Come out hyer like a man and take ther durn'dest drubbin' ov yer life!"

Colonel Kittens wur a-prancin' and a-dancin' like mad.

His arms wur wavin' like wings.

Them other two fellers, by ther way, had crawled into each other's fond embrace by this time, and wur goin' et hammer and tongs.

Seein' that he had ter fight or stand boogoo'd in ther sight ov ther camp, ther actin' mayor screwed up and went forth to do battle with ther Kitten, and they pranced up to each other.

Et wur high 'citin', I tell yer et was.

They went shyin' and sparrin' around at each other, ther ground some onstiddy fer them, too, but not ez much so as et had been fer Lippy and Hop.

So they went, one-afraid-and-t'other-dasn't sort ov fashion, till at last they fouled with ther two galoots thet wur already havin' et warm on ther ground, when down they went.

In ther fall, they somehow parted t'other two, and Lippy lit onter ther Kittin, and Hop hopped onter Gila, and then they sashayed some, you bet. Et was nip and tuck amongst ther four ov 'em, and ther crowd went wild with delight and all jined hands and went dancin' around in a circle.

CHAPTER XII.

SAL CUDDYLOOP NOW.

Sech a lallygaboo time ye never seen in yer life.

Thar was ther platform, with ther de-

funct on et, in his wooden overcoat hadn't be-

desarted. Then thar was ther hull mah pylashun ov ther town dancin' holt ov hands, like they had all leave ov their senses, whoopin' lot ov fool Apaches.

In ther circle wur ther combat They wur goin' into et in dead I'm tellin' ye.

They had no regard fer one a feelin's, but dug away fer all th wuth.

Gila Gabe's sash and trimm black wur gittin' torn and strew'd promiskus, and ther claret wur right free. On ther whole, et w jolliest funeral I ever 'tended.

"Ain't this hyer scrumpshus?" out my pard.

"Et shur is," I had ter agree w "We aire right in et, Bob."

"Clean up to our necks," he said again. "Wouldn't 'a' missed et f thing."

"Ditter with me," said I. "We a story ter tell when we git back to Crick, a tale that will plum 'stonis natives."

"We shur will," said he.

Then we continnered whoopin' ther rest ov 'em, and ther way we a around thar was a caution ter kill.

But, that didn't last forever.

Ther four gladdyaturs soon beg tire out, and they drawed away fro 'nuther.

They wur a sorry lot, all tor, scratched and bleedin', and looked they had been drawed through he ragged knot holes.

Thar was Colonel Kittens, lookin' like a tom cat that had been to Thar was ther actin' mayor, lookin' he hed been run through a quartz n

T'other two wur nondescript.

Ther dancin' ceased.

As soon as ther ring wur broken ther foreground sprung Sal Cuddy like a 'vengin' Nemmysus.

"Fur shame!" she squawked.

She glared around as if ter pic her p'ticlar victim.

Every man jack thar had busine another direction, and that circle w ed out instanter.

"Fur shame!" she squawked a more so. "Ter think ov ther may layin' dead hyer, and sech goin' around his dead body. I wonder world don't come to a end!"

My pard stepped for'd.

I know et was rash ov him, bu stepped.

He took off his hat, made a stid salaam as he could, and said:

"Fair lady, I agree with ye thet is a shame, a howlin' shame, and it be made right."

"Made right!" she bawled.

"That was what I said, madam," my pard, softly like.

"How kin et be made right?"

"They had orter be licked," said

"They hev been lickin' each oth said she.

"Then let's lock 'em up," said

pard.

"Would ye?"

"Sech perseedin's is out ov place

quiet funeral," said my pard. "I Ph! y

sure would, ef I had my way."

"Ef Gunsight John wur only ali she sighed.

"Then thar wouldn't be no funer said Bob.

"That's so. Ef we only had his hyer," she sighed.

"He will never be found, same as

pard said in his orashun," said Bob.

"Alas, alas!" she wailed. "And

at I might 'a' had him ter wed, hadn't been so hard on him. Et ne sad ter think ov et."

she shur was sad.

mopped her eyes with her big and sopped up a tear that hed down to ther end ov her mole.

n ye would wed again?" asked sh ez could be.

I would."

n yer first 'sperience must have appy."

growin' sorter interested like, n't onderstand et at all, young

wasn't no spring rooster, and I know why she called him young ut she did. Mebbby out ov con- dended.

er ther sex generally.

oby I don't," said Bob.

hat time ther crowd had stopped en, and ther four late pugylists therin' themselves up.

nk Cuddyloop wasn't a match fer how," she said. "When I had ter him thar wasn't ther spirit ov a him. It was so easy thet et made e," said Bob.

oy he did.

w, et wasn't so with Gunsight she continnered. "He was some a fight, and I thought if I could n it would be interestin' when we r have a fallin' out. But, poor soul, gone to his reward before I could rt him."

mayor was a man mighty to be tulated.

is too plum bad," said Bob. "I he might be called back to bless ne life, madam. But, aire these ellers to be locked up?"

ey had orter be."

t, then, who would be actin' may- hy not you?" said she.

?" said Bob.

er same," said she.

o!" said Bob, plum dazed.

ought et was time fer me ter chip t then.

ar ain't a man hyer better fitted er office," said I, loud enough fer hear. "Se what broots these hyer made ov themselves, and draw yer comparisons."

Thar wur indycashuns ov seasickness on our part.

"Bob," said I, "how do you feel?"

"I'm beginnin' ter feel good now," said he.

"But," said I, "kin you bear up till you have said that sarmount?"

"I plum forgot et!" he exclaimed at me.

"Then ye had better fix yer mind on et," said I.

"Can't we omit et?" he asked.

"Nary omit."

Bob groaned.

I knowed he was weakenin'.

"Bob," said I, "what did we come hyer fer?"

"Ter have a by gosh time," he answered prompt enough.

"Are we havin' et?" I asked him.

"We plum aire, so fur."

"And aire we goin' ter have ther rest ov it? or aire you goin' ter flunk and spile et?"

"We'll have et," said he.

He said it in a way thet meant et, too.

Thar we sot, in our high hats and mournin' array, when ther crowd kem back.

Sal Cuddyloop was at ther head, with a lot more wimmin flockin' after her, and ther crowd ov men bringin' up ther rear.

I straightened up and greeted 'em.

Sal Cuddyloop swooped down on him, grabbed him by ther collar and ther breast works ov his breeches, and made him walk Spanish, I'm tellin' ye.

"Fetch along them thar other three," she hollered. "We'll see whether or not a funeral ov a decent man is goin' ter be made a shame and a mockery ov, I reckon. Fetch 'em along!"

And they wur fetched, forthwith.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY PARD GITS THAR.

Et was a full swoop.

I looked at Bob and he looked at me. Thar wuz ther four ov 'em, in ther hands ov ther Fillistines, so ter put et.

"Bob," said I, "et is gittin' seeryus."

"Et plum shur is," said he.

We took holt ov each other, to stand stiddy while we talked.

"You aire nomynated fer actin' mayor," said I.

"But they'll never 'lect me," said Bob.

"Why not?" said I.

"I'm from Cross Crick."

"What's ther diff?"

"They hate Cross Crick wuss'n pizen."

"Yet see how plum white they have used us all day, so fur," said I.

"That's only 'cause ther fates hev favored us," he said. "Et is goin' ter turn, see ef et don't."

"Et will be our fault ef et does."

"Mebby enough," said he.

"Well," said I, "you aire nomynated, and et only remains ter git ther crowd willin' ter vote ye into offis, and we'll conduct ther rest ov this hyer funeral to suit us."

"Kin we do it?" he asked me.

"You leave that to me," said I. "We'll git on ther platform and be thar when they come back."

Most ov ther crowd had gone off to ther jail to see ther unfortunates locked up, leavin' that part of ther field to us and some ov ther rest that felt too tired fer much exertion.

We made two or three tries, and then got up on ther platform and sot down on our soap boxes.

We sot still and sollum.

Ther fact ov ther business was, that platform had tooken ter pitchin' and rollin' wuss'n a tubby-boat in a chop sea.

Thar wur indycashuns ov seasickness on our part.

"Aire they cooped?" I asked 'em.

"They sure enough aire," answered Sal.

I riz up in my place, givin' myself plenty of spread ter stand stiddy.

"Gents ov Sawbuck," said I, "your fair town is now without ary actin' mayor. Eet has been proposed that my pard hyer, Bob Horner by name, be 'elected ter that 'portant office."

I waved plenty, and salammed some.

They cheered.

"Thus far," said I, "everything has passed off as nice as pie, with ther exception ov ther recent onfortunate occurrences, and fer that yer late actin' mayor was 'sponsible."

They cheered plenty more.

I salammed.

"Now," I said furder, "we have come over hyer as a dellygashun from Cross Crick, as I have already told ye before, ter show our good will, to do honor to yer dead, and ter cement ther brotherhood ov ther two towns, ez et wur."

They all whooped her up. They wur in mood fer whoopin' anything.

"Tharfor," I said furder, "ef ye see fit to 'lect my pard to ther office ov actin' mayor, we'll do our level best to carry on ther rest ov this hyer funeral to ther honor and credit ov all consarned. A man ov ther standin' ov yer late mayor deserves ther best that kin be done or said ov him, and my pard is modestly ready ter do his best."

How they yelled!

"Henceforth," said I furder, "all in favor ov makin' You-bet Bob ther actin' mayor ov this hyer camp fer ther time bein' please ter signify accordin'."

And blame me if every man jack ov 'em didn't vote fer him, and some ov ther wimmin, too.

They follered ther lead ov Sal Cuddyloop.

Then I turned to my pard.

"You-bet Bob," said I, "you have been 'lected to ther greatest honor this hyer camp could show ye. You aire now ther actin' mayor ov this hyer burg, vested with all ther 'thority ov ther posishun, and ef you don't do honor to et, et's your fault."

I sot down amidst much cheerin'.

"Bob," I whuspurd, "we aire thar."

"We aire gittin' thar," said Bob.

"You have got ter say somethin'," said I.

"What'll I say?" he asked me.

"Make yer 'naugral speak," said I.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Well, say somethin'," I told him.

"Ye have got to. Remember, et all 'pends on you now."

Bob looked queerious, and no wonder, havin' so much honor heaped onto him all to oncet, but I seen him grit his jaws and I knowed he would stand up to ther rack.

He got on his feet.

Et took him a minit to git his grip, but he got et.

Then he looked around him, as if he was monark ov all he surveyed, and fer a fact he was, too.

"Feller galoots," he said, right cut bold, "hyer's greetin' ye. You have done me a honor ov which I am preud, and I'll try to do honor to ther trust reposed in me."

He paused ter hikkup.

They cheered.

"Fust and foremost, by ther power in me vested as mayor ov this hyer town, I order and decree a treat fer ther hull crowd ov ye, and may et be had with no delay. As fer me, jest fetch out a bottle ov ther best, and I will drink again to ther honor ov yer dead."

That was an extreme that I hadn't looked fer, but as et happened he had struck a pop'lar kord in ther crowd.

Thar was ther biggest cheer ov all, and away they went fer ther Gilt Edge.

I was surveyin' ther crowd, and I sighted Sal Cuddyloop.

Thar was somethin' in her eyes that made me think that she thought mebbe a mistake had been made som'rs.

I 'voided her glance all I could, but I seen her head a-bobbin' this way and that as she gossiped with some ov ther other wimmin, and I surmised that somethin' was afoot.

They fetched out a bottle, same as my pard had 'quested, and he took a pull at et to ther health ov ther defunct, and handed et on to me. With ther crowd lookin' on, I couldn't do other than foller suit, but when I had done so I slipped ther bottle under me in ther soap box, so's Bob couldn't make a pig ov himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FUNERAL SURMOUNT.

Things wur gittin' lovely.

Ther goose wur hanging altitoodinous, you bet.

My pard had took a seat on ther head ov ther coffin while we waited.

That thar platform was onstiddy, and was like ther deck ov a vessel in crumpled waters.

Purty soon ther crowd begun ter gather oncet more, comin' out ov ther Gilt Edge a-wipin' their mouths on their sleeves in a satisfied manner.

Thar was a general onstiddyness ov carriage amongst 'em all.

Et was observable to anybody.

Me and Bob wur about the only respectable ones thar, 'cept ther wimmin.

Wull, they gathered around oncet more, and then I guv Bob ther word that et was time fer ther funeral.

"Bob?" said I.

"Wull?" said he.

"Ther funera.," said I.

"What about et?" said he.

"Preach et," said I.

That thar sorter sobered him.

Yes, I have ter admit that he wur gittin' how-kum-ye-so.

He had been rumynatin', ez et wur, and had clean forgot that he was master ov sarymonies.

He stiffened up a bit, and looked over ther crowd, as if wonderin' whur he was at, and ther crowd was growin' some impatient.

"Come, actin' mayor!" shouted one galoot.

"Let's hear from ye," said another.

"Whur's yer sarmount?"

"Talk et out."

"Ready!"

Bob staggered to his feet, and hang me ef I didn't expect him ter go head-long off'n ther platform.

I jumped up ter steady him, but that thar platform humped up in ther middle ther minnit I did so, and almost flung me inter eternity.

I sot down suddent, inter one ov ther soap boxes.

My pard sot down almost as suddent, plump onto ther mesosternum ov ther defunct.

Sal Cuddyloop let out a whoop as loud as if he had sot down on her.

She was in ther rear ov ther crowd, along with ther other wimmin ov ther camp.

"Disgraceful!" she cried.

I agreed with her.

Ther other wimmin took ter cacklin' wuss'n pasel ov hens.

"Men ov Sawbuck, pitch him off'n thar!" Sal yaupped out in tones of vinegar.

I knowed that crisus wur at hand, and I tried my best ter git up on my pins, but that thar soap box held me fast.

Bob, too, seemed ter waken to ther importance ov ther 'casion.

He made one or two efforts, and stood up.

He tottered mightily, but he stood.

"Fur shame on yer!" cried Sal.

"Hold yer peace, old gal," said Bob, wavin' his hand soothin'. "I'm all right, you bet."

"You had orter be hanged, that's what you'd orter be!" ther Amazon fired back at him. "I'd like ter do et fer ye."

"Hold yer peace," my pard repeated at her. "Yer needn't bother yer head about my hangin', old lady. I am all right, and I'm mayor ov this yere camp, b'gosh!"

He had got a hook fer his toes under ther edge of ther coffin, and that helped him ter brace up.

"A disgrace to ther camp!" cried Sally.

"An honor to et," said Bob.

"I say a disgrace! and if I could git at yer I'd nip ye short in ther bud, so ter speak!"

"Stay whar ye be," said Bob, wavin' her scornful. "We aire now goin' ter have ther funeral of this dear good man what's passed in his chips. Let ther crowd obsarve due silence."

He waved his hands over 'em in a fatherly way.

He looked plum gorjus, with his tall hat and black streamin's, and I begun ter perk up a bit.

I was all ther while tryin' ter git out ov that soap box, but et held on faster'n a brother, and I couldn't seem ter budge et wuth a cent.

And Sal, she wur a-tryin' ter work her way through, but ther crowd was thick in her direction, and ther men wur sorter ugly and wouldn't give way to her jest on her say-so.

"Friends and feller galoots," said Bob, wavin' and salaamin' as much as he dared ter do, "give me yer ears fer a brief peeryud ov while, and I will show up ther vurchos ov yer dear departed mayor, surnamed Gunsight, in a way that will do him proud."

Ther crowd perked up and cheered.

"He wur a daisy mayor, as I have heard tell," Bob continnered. "Et is a pity that ther good and beautiful have ter die young, but sech is life, and et can't be helped. Many a better man has been hanged much younger than yer mayor hyer died. Thar is no respecer ov persons when ther grim deestroyer gits on yer trail."

I was proud ov Bob, and ther crowd cheered him some more.

Gittin' interested in what he wur sayin', I fergot ter try ter git out of that box I was stuck in.

"I am no parson," said Bob, further, "and fer that reason can't mebbe send him off strick 'cordin' to ther gospel plan, but I'll do ther best I kin in thet thar direction."

More yaups.

Even Sal was now listenin'.

"Thar text ov ther 'casion will be found some'rs, no matter jist whar, ye kin look et up some other time. Et is in these hyer words: 'The wicked cease from troublin' and the weary is at rest.' I take et that is a prime text fer this hyer case."

He looked around ter see how et took. Ther crowd seemed ter swoller et all right, and bracin' up to et, he continnered:

"Ther weary is at rest or a dead sure

fack, and ther wicked won't do troublin', you kin bet. When ais hat dead he is dead, and that is th' thar i et. My pard," wavin' at me, fer yer me what a noble feller Gunsight, I wur, so I won't dwell on that. At, he u sum up his prospecks in t'other gurgles et wur." he was r

More cheers.

"He is purty plum sartain o-to and reception," said Bob, funder. s ther no doubt beer received with o and pressed plenty warm ther git corn got thar. And I ain't no doubt hldn't w in' himself as much at home as stances will adm't, fer that waser must as you will all allow, I reckon. Hand m John, ther good, ther true, the you'll g ful, we mourn yer loss, but we ater one ter know that you aire out o?"

heartless world and in a warm a-gimb They whooped et.

"Thar ain't much more to I man n Bob still continnered. "You sook m him, pards ov Sawbuck, and Cnd ter sa feels fer ye in yer serrer. We haoap box times felt fer ye in a differenottle I o fact, hev gone gunnin' fer ye galoot occasions; but that is now a ould say ther past. We now clasp hands and du this open coffin, and pledge ye t; but I Crick is still able to take keer de!"

and asks no odds ov anybodyed ald nothin' of Sawbuck City. You almost warmest symputhy in this yer vas. The And ter yer, Gunsight John, pty!

committed fer an indefinite peehe had may ther gods have marcy on le again

Bob had took off his hat wh crowd, that, and he stooped and shook on he s man by ther hand.

The crowd whooped and yau ther t way wild ter witness, and I cl order w hands.

Et was a send-off good enogram anybody, I thought.

But, Bob wasn't done yet. b was n

CHAPTER XV.

CAPPIN' THER CLIMAX.

He was standin' thar, was Bopart wi in' in his pockets and a-lookin' a d on ther floor.

Et struck me thet he was lome befo somethin', and et struck me at whistle time that it was ther bottle t put in ther soap box.

Also et struck me thet thet wasn't in ther same box that that tha but in another one that was jir. my reach. I hadn't dropped inte et is!"

box. "Cy," said Bob, "whur's thlers did at?"

"What bottle?" said I. Cuddyloo

"Ther one I had," he mentio ther ca

"I dunno," said I. kin' abou

"I guv et to yer," said he, so that c

ted. "Shur?" said I. ow of.

"Double shur," he growle hyer fu

"Don't yer try ter hide et, or at down, yer."

He was a-lookin' hard at me then, a

save my life I couldn't keep we'll sha

from movin' in ther direction l around

ther bottle was at. s of the

Bob follered my sight, and sig concern

"Hyet it is," he cried, makin' ray!" ye

fer et. He reached too fur; ther plapper thin

a lurch, and over he went. me git

I am speakin' figgery, you opop was

I suppose things wur solid eshe mea

ther dead man. ard had

Bob got ther bottle, and whsight by

body was laffin' at him he got him up,

pints oncet more and tottere

front ter say further: defunct

"Feller galoots," he saluted eck, the

off, but

ed won't do
et. When his hat and wavin' ther bottle
d that is th' "thar is only one thing more
in' at me, fer yer dead, and that is this
teller Gunsight, hyer's to yer health!"
ll on that. At, he ups with ther bottle and
s in t'other gurgle.
he was never goin' ter stop.
I hollered.
m sartain on-to and righted ther bottle.
b, funder. s ther matter?" he asked, won-
ved with o
warm ther git corned," said I.
no doubt hldn't wonder a bit ef I did,"
at home as
er that waser mustn't till ther fun is over,"
I reckon. Hand me that bottle."
er true, the you'll go and git corned," said
ss, but we ater one than both ov us, don't
aire out o?"
in a warns a-gimblin' and a-bobbin' over
coffin in a way that threatened
a more to l man most desprut.
ed. "You sook me and turned to ther
uck, and Cnd ter save me I couldn't git out
rrer. We hsoap box—not even ter git holt
a differenottle I couldn't!
in' fer ye galoots!" he said again; "a
is now a ould say somethin' about ashes
asp hands and dust to dust, or somethin'
pledge yet; but I say speerut to speerut,
take keer de!"
ov anybodyed ald gurgled again.
City. You almst wild, ter see how reck-
n this yervas. Ther bottle was more than
ht John, yty!
definite peeche had done gurglin' he righted
marcy on le again, and he looked out over
his hat wh crowd, steady as he could, and
and shook on he spoke again.
feller galoots, as mayor ov yer
ed and yau ther time bein', it is in my
s, and I cl order what is ter my mind best
interests ov all consarned. This
f good enogram is about drawin' to a
he yet. o was he, by ther way he wob-
R XV. s goin' ter say," he continnered,
R CLIMAX. would be right and proper, be-
ar, was Bopart with him ferever, ter give
ad a-lookin'ct a drink. He will be a long
ad, et is most probable, and a
he was lome before he will git a show ter
uck me at whistle again. What do yer
r bottle tl
thar crowd was jist in ther hu-
e thet thet.
box that that thar is a good idee!" cried
that was jpr.
opped inte et is!" said another. "We must
white thing by Gunsight John,
whur's tllers did by us."
t yer do no sech thing!" piped
Cuddyloop. "Eet wull be a dis-
he mentic ther camp ef ye do! What aire
kin' about?"
said he, so that old gal out," cried Bob.
n't got no call ter chip in hyer,
ow of. Keep her out, and we'll
hyer funeral to suit ourselves."
de et, or at down, a-straddle of ther coffin.
he spoke again.
ard at me then, after we hev drunk," he
dn't keep we'll shake hands with ther de-
direction around, and that will end ther
s of ther day, so fur as his fu-
nt, and sig concerned."
ied, makin'ay!" yelled ther reckless cusses.
what we'll do, and et will be
ther plapper thing."
went. me git in thar, I tell yer!" Sal
ry, you oop was a-yellin'.
r solid e she meant business.
ard had leaned over and got hold
sight by ther shoulder, and he
m he got him up, settin' face to face with
d tottere
defunct was some limber about
eck, ther rigor mortus havin'
off, but Bob got holt ov him by

ther whiskers and held him steddly while
he spoke ter him.
"Gunsight John," he said, feelin'-like,
"this hyer is a sad partin' fer you, but
before you go let's take one ter old
times. Hyer's lookin' ye in ther eye and
a-wushin' ye well. Hyer's to yer health
on t'other side. Hyer's to yer journe."
At each peerud he tipped and imbibed
a swolle.
And Sal, she had her dander up, and
she was a-sashayin' to ther front.
"Now, pardner, et is your turn," said
Bob.
"Et wull soon be my turn," hollered
Sal.
That thar crowd laffed wuss'n a pack
ov wild hyeners over ther findin' ov a
feast, but ther defunct took et all in good
part and never oncet offered ter kick.
But, Sal did.
I was a-strugglin' my hardest to git
out ov that thar box, but I couldn't, and
ther more I tried ther more I seemed ter
stick fast; and by that time ther platform
wur a-high-rollin' at sech a rate that et
was dangerous.
That thar box seemed to weigh a ton,
and every time I would fetch et clear et
would pull me back with a force that
nigh about loosened by teeth.
And all ther time ther crowd wur
whoopin' et wild, as if et had been ther
greatest sarcus they had ever seen in
their lives.
But, Sal was a-comin'.
Ther rest didn't see her, but I did.
They all had their eyes to ther front,
but I was facin' t'other way.
Her arms wur wavin' like ther wings
ov a windmill, and at every wave she
fetch'd a couple ov galoots.
Et was amazin' to behold.
And after her kem all ther rest of ther
wimmin.
They wur follerin' in Sal's wake, as et
wur, and I looked fer a sad awakenin' fer
my pard.
Et was a high time fer somebody ter
nip his game in the bud.
He was carryin' a joke a leetle too fur.
Sal Cuddyloop done ther nippin'!

CHAPTER XVI.
BOB IN A BOX.

Thar was Bob, straddle ov ther coffin,
and he didn't dare to let go, fer if he had
he would gone down in a heap, and he
knewed et. He had loaded himself clear
up to ther guzzle.
Oncet let him git on his back, and he
would be as dead as ther dead man, al-
most. I knowed that, and so did he, and
tharfor et was to his intrust to brace up
long as he could do et.
Gunsight had laid himself down again,
and was behavin' respectable.
I opine he was the only decent galoot
in ther gang.
Sal Cuddyloop kem through that crowd
like a shot out ov a mortar.
She had buckled on her armor, as et
wur, and she flung men right and left as
she cut her swath.
And on reachin' ther front she reached
over and cut my pard a swipe on ther
cabeez that made him see stars.
"I'll l'arn ye some respeck fer ther
dead!" she yelled at him. "I'll l'arn ye
ter—whoo-oo!"
Thet thar swipe had done more'n she
had figgered on.
Bob had swayed a second or so, this
way and that, as if pickin' a place to fall,
and bless me if he didn't fall clean plum
into her arms!
Her whoop might 'a' been heard a mile,
I reckon.
And no wonder.

She guv a jump back, instead ov hug-
gin' to my pard as she had orter done,
and off ther platform kem Bob.
Down on ther ground he went, limber
and flimp, and then ther way Sal whoop-
ed was a caution ter kill.
And all ther other wimmin took et up
till et was like bedlum let out fer a hol-
lyday.
Ther crowd ov men sorter took skar
at what had happened, thinkin' et was
Gunsight, and stampeded like a lot ov
cattle, leavin' me thar to face ther moo-
sic ther best I could in my situashun.
I tried again ter git out ov that box,
but no go; I was thar to stay.
And Amazon Sal, she was a givin' et
to my pard right and left, and he unable
ter lift a finger in his 'fense.
"I'll lam ther stuffin' out ov ye!" she
shrieked, ketchin' him one on ther left
side ov his head. "I'll knock ther livin'
daylights out ov ye!" ketchin' him one
on t'other side.
And I really thought she would, too.
"Hold on, fair maiden!" I hollered out
to her. "He's my pard, and I can't see
him 'bused like that."
"I'll sarve you ther same!" she hol-
lered back at me. "I'll 'tend ter you
soon's I git done with him! I'll show ye
that ye can't come hyer frum Cross
Crick and run things as ye please!"
I got some frantic, about that time.
You bet I made a grand splurge to git
out ov that soap box.
But, et wasn't ther least use, fer ther
darn thing stuck to me wuss'n a case ov
fever.
And all ther time my pard was a-get-
tin' et hot on every side from haff a
dozen or more ov them wimmin, till I
thought he was plum shur dead.
I hollered and struggled, but ther more
I struggled ther harder I seemed ter
stick in that box, and that platform was
cuttin' antics wuss'n a balloon in a chop
wind.
In my frantic efforts to git to my
pard's rescue, I did git haff onto my feet
oncet, but I didn't stay thar wuth a cent.
I took to runnin' backwards, and ther
next I knowed I was flyin' into eternity
from off'n that thar platform, and I kem
down on ther ground in a way to make
me think I had dropped from ther moon.
At first I was dazed, but I purty soon
got my bearin's.
I could look under ther platform, and
thar was them wimmin still a-punishin'
my pard.
They wur about satisfied by that time,
though, and as a last bit ov spite they
took ther coffin down, lifted Gunsight
tenderly out, and slammed my pard into
ther box in a way that made my blood
run cold ter witness.
Havin' done ther wust, they took ther
dead mayor up and carried him tenderly
away in their arms, and in a minnit or
two Sal Cuddyloop and all her gang had
disappeared from ther scene.
I was thankful they had fergot me.
My pard was like a dead man—in fact,
I feared he was a dead man.
I called to him, but got no 'sponse, and
I struggled some more to git out ov ther
fix I was in, but et wasn't no use.
Every time I tried et, ther ground
would take on a rollin' that would dump
me, and finally I made up my mind I
would have to take et easy till some good
Samaritan kem my way.
Ther wimmin gone, ther crowd begun
ter come back.
They wur all talkin' and shoutin' ter
oncet, and I couldn't make 'em hear me
at all.
Every jack ov 'em had aboard all he
could carry—some ov them a good deal

more, and lots ov 'em wur strewed around on ther ground onable ter stand up.

They kem to ther coffin, and ther first thing they done was to slap on the lid.

That made me plum crazy.

Did they mean to bury my pard? Did they mistake him for ther late lamented?

I tried ter holler, but somehow my voice had gone hoarse and I couldn't make a sound that could be heard above all ther babel that was goin' on, and they picked that coffin up and sot et on ther platform.

Then I heard 'em a-plannin'.

"We might as well cut et short now," one of 'em said.

"Yes, that's so," said another. "Poor Gunsight, et was rough on him, et shur was."

"But rougher on them fellers from Cross Crick," said another. "Wonder if Sal left any life in 'em at all? Let's pull 'em out and see ef she did."

"No, let 'em lay thar; we'll 'tend to them later on. They won't git away till we have planted Gunsight, and then we'll come back hyer and finish ther job Sal bergun."

I was struck with horror.

Et was my pard they had in that thar box, as I said!

Ther more I tried ter holler ther more my voice got husky, and I was onable ter whusper.

It was plum desprut.

Wull, they gathered around thar in force, all a-talkin', and after a time they shouldered ther coffin and started fur ther place ov plantin'.

Then I went plum wild. My pard goin' ter be buried alive, and me onable ter do a thing in his behaff! Dear reader, kin ye fetch up a feller feelin' to 'pre-sheate what I felt?

If ye kin, do et.

Worst ov all, two of them fellers had taken our hats, and they was at ther head ov ther proseshun, ther chief mourners!

Some feller had brought out Lippy Doozberry's 'corjun, and was makin' a doleful sound on et, not able to play a bit, and in that fashion they took ther circle ov ther camp.

Havin' done, they set forth fer ther grave, and ther last I seen ov my pard was his wooden overcoat, when they rounded a bend in ther gulch. Oh! but I was plum gaboo'd. But et was no use my strugglin' against fate; thar I was, fast in a soap box.

CHAPTER XVII.

ME 'N' SAL.

My pard was doomed; I felt that in my bones.

So distressed I was, that I hardly knowed whur I was at, shur.

I seemed ter be hangin' on by ther ragged edge ov nowhar, and all ther world swimmin' around me.

Ther ground was a-heavin' and a-rollin', ther houses wur a-hobnobbin' with one another, and ther hills round about 'peared to be havin' a dizzy waltz.

I don't know that I ever had anything to distress me ther way my pard's fate distressed me then, and me powerless to lift a finger fer him. Thar I had ter lay, watchin' his funeral purseshun.

And that purseshun, by ther way, was a queerious affair.

It wormed and wobbled along wuss'n a snake with a jag on, and I looked every minnit fer 'em to spill my pard all over ther ground.

Then ov a suddint et kem to me that this wasn't my pard's purseshun, but another one; that et was made up ov wimmin, and that Sal Cuddyloop was at ther head ov it!

Shur enough; fer hadn't my pard's funeral kurtayzh already gone out ov sight?

Fer shur et had, and I rubbed mine eyes.

I looked hard.

Ther surprise sorter cleared my head a bit, and ther ground seemed to grow a degree more quiet.

Thar was no mistakin' et; thar was Sal Cuddyloop, with all ther rest ov ther wimmin' ov ther camp after her, and they was bearin' ther late lamented on a shutter.

They wur comin' in ther direction ov ther platform.

I sorter shrunk up and wished thet I could hide myself in that thar soap box entirely.

Then I thought ov my pard again, and that sorter roused me up to ther danger he was in, and my head sorter quieted a bit and I tried ter holler out.

To my delight I found that I had got my voice back again some.

"Sal!" I hollered. "Sal Cuddyloop!"

"I'll give ye Sal," she fired back at me, comin' near.

"I don't want her," I 'torted, "but I do want my pard, and you must save him."

"Your pard bur darn!" she snapped. "Whur is that thar coffin at, I want ter know? Whur is all ther men critters? Speak up, or I'll lam ther duff out ov yer!"

"That is jist et," I murmured. "You dumped my pard into that thar coffin, and they have sot off to bury him, thinkin' et is yer defunct mayor; and they will have done ther job fer him if ye don't hustle to ther rescue. Fur the love—"

"Him in that thar coffin!" she yawped at me. "Him a-disgracin' the kaskut that was made fer Gunsight John!"

"Anyhow, thar he is," said I. "Fur ther love ov heaven save him!"

"I'll save that coffin!" she hollered.

Off she sot, on a run.

"Git me out'n this hyer box," I begged ov ther rest ov ther wimmin.

Two ov 'em undertook ther job, and one pullin' me and t'other pullin' ther box, they managed to tear us asunder, ez et wur.

As soon as I was on my pins I started after Sal.

Ov all ther crooked trails I ever foltered in my life, I am free ter say that was ther plum crookedest.

I could see Sal all ther time, but I would no sooner take her bearin's in one direction than I would find her in another, and et took me haff ther time to zigzag that thar gulch.

I was thankful that et wasn't any wider.

But, mebbly my mind was better'n her'n, fer I was most up to her by ther time we reached ther plantin' ground.

Thar was ther citizens ov Sawbuck City, flocked around ther open hole in ther ground, and they wur about ter deposit my pard in ther earth fer keeps, I tell yer.

"Hold on!" yelled Sal.

"Yas, hold on!" bellered I.

"Yer have got ther wrong man!" said Sal.

"Et is my pard ye have got in ther box!" said I.

They stopped, plum dazed with amaze, and looked at us.

On we dashed, Sal first and me second, and ther crowd opened when we kem up.

Thar was a slight down slop and Sal was goin' at sech a rate couldn't seem ter stop.

Ther coffin was jist ahead, I expected sure enough she'd trip over et, but she didn't; an' caught hold ov et and waded.

But, what about me?

I realized all ov a sudden goin' down that slope with fu-

In watchin' Sal and thar fate, I had fergot all about ther time bein', and hadn't put on ther brakes a bit.

Now that I tried to, et was couldn't no more stop than I, and jist ther minnit that Sal straightened up, I collided with on.

Over that thar coffin she first, and into ther grave, at her lead instanter.

In we wur, fer a hard fact.

Then mebbly thar wasn't was no fun fer us.

Ef thar had been a thousand in that hole they couldn't a wussn' what that old gal did.

I really thort that ther dement had arrove, and that handed over to ther tender ther Old Boy himself, and rubbin' me down.

She bit and scratched and yelled in a way that was am hold, I reckon.

Et shur was amazin' to expr

She made shreds and raved funeral fixin's in short order coat and vest shameful, and deder my shirt into ribbons. what wild havoc she would had when she got down to bare h

But, I was saved before et

Friendly hands wur let do and I was lifted out'n that was more dead 'n alive.

Then they helped out Sal wanted to continner ther job gun, but they kept her off'n that I wasn't in no fit shape round jist then.

Sal's back ha'r was all do was lashin' et to and fro w heffer lashes her tail.

"I'll finish him yet!" she g ed, shakin' her fist.

"Put et off, I berseech ov tered. "Citerzens, my pard thar coffin, alive!"

That brought 'em back to t ov life oncet more, and they thar coffin forthwith in som haste, and thar was my pard.

I was consarned, fearin' e sure enough dead.

But, he was only dead in a-sleepin' off his booze.

They dumped him out, and out ov ther way, and by the rest ov ther wimmin had co Gunsight.

He was laid tenderly to long box, ther wimmin havin face, after his bitin' ther manner I have set forth, a was secured oncet more.

Sal and ther wimmin had men away, and now they low funct into his hole.

Et was sollum, ez sollum a

I had crawled over to wh was at, and was tryin' ter ro

Et wasn't no use, though, stone gone, so ter speak, a while they wur fillin' in t

couldn't git a peep out ov ther grave had been filled

up, then Sal Cuddyloop took

hand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW WE KEM OUT.

"Yer kin hang me fer a sick kitten ef I know," was what he spoke.

He was a sight to behold, and I opine that I was sim'lar—in fact, I know et.

"Bob," said I, "have we had fun enough?"

"Plenty enough," said Bob.

"I move that we go home," said I.

"I second ther moshun," said he, prompt enough.

We got onto our pins, and took a further survey ov things around.

About ther time we wur doin' that we heard a yell, and a dozen wimmin swooped down onto us.

We tried to dodge 'em, but et wasn't no use; they had us before we knowed whur we was at, and off they marched us to ther camp, prisoners ov war, ef so I might say.

Thar we found that a change had taken place in our absence.

Sal Cuddyloop had been 'lected actin' mayor, and she was on ther platform in all ther pomp ov greatness.

She had on all ther remnants ov our mournin', includin' ther streamers from our hosses' tails, and one of our tall hats, mine or Bob's, and no matter which et was.

Other wimmin wur on ther platform with her, and et looked as if et was petticoat rule thar at Sawbuck.

And et shur was, fer ther time bein'.

Well, me and Bob wur brought up before her, and she looked us chillin' scornful when she sot eyes onto us.

She stood up in her place, and she said, said she:

"Wimmin and men ov Sawbuck City, hyer aire the two galoots that have brung disgrace upon our beloved town this day. I demand ov ye all, as actin' mayor ov ther camp, what shall be done with 'em?"

"Shoot 'em up!" hollered one feller.

"Tar and feather 'em!" cackled one ov ther wimmin.

"That is what I would do, ef we had ther tar to do et with," said Sal; and I believe she would, too. "But, bein' as we ain't got et, I am goin' to send 'em home as a warnin' to ther galoots ov Cross Crick not ter come hyer any more under no sarcumstances."

Thar was cheerin'.

"Fetch forth ther hosses!" she ordered, wavin' her hand as if she owned ther hull camp.

Some fellers set off to do ther fetchin', and she ordered some more to bring ropes a-plenty; so et wasn't long till she had ther hosses and ther ropes on hand.

"Now," she further ordered, "bind 'em and tie 'em onto ther critters with ther faces to ther south ov ther same, and start 'em off. Ef they git home, well and good, and if they don't, no matter. Et ain't likely they will pine fer any more funerals hyer, and if they ever do come again they will come to ther own, they kin 'pend on't!"

So, they took us and they tied us fast onto our critters, same as she had told 'em, face to our hosses' tails; and then, amidst ther greatest whoopin' ye ever heerd tell ov in yer life, they sot us adrift, and we cut loose fer Cross Crick at a desprut rate, jist as ther shades ov night wur burginnin' ter hover over ther gulch, as if a kind Provvydence wanted ter hide us from ther gaze ov mortal man in our disgrace.

As our hosses carried us over ther ridge that inclosed ther gulch, we didn't have ter look back—seein' as we wur already face about—ter see a grand and highfalutin' display ov fireworks to sullybrate ther wind-up ov ther plum greatest day ther camp ov Sawbuck had ever had in its history. And thar's ther hull story.

Before we got home we fell in with a pard who kindly set us free and put us right on our hosses, and when I writ ther thing up fer ther Howler I omitted some ov ther minor details that I have men-shuned hyer.

THE END.

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